UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE REBELLIOUS LOVER IN ENGLISH POETRY

LOUIS B. SALOMON

A THESIS

IN ENGLISH

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I

THE purpose of the present study is to trace the progress of amorous insubordination through English poetry: that is, to observe the poetical expression of attitudes opposed to the usual devoted submissiveness of love verses. There are degrees and kinds of rebelliousness to be differentiated, but the unifying spirit that prompts them all may be defined colloquially as that of the worm that turns. The poems with which I am concerned are addressed by the poet not "To Anthea, who may command him anything," but generally "To Myrrha hard-hearted" or "To Phillis, who slighted him"; and instead of the mood in which "the faithful lover giveth to his mistress his heart as his best and only treasure," I catch the moment in which "the lover waxeth wiser and will not die for affection." In terms of that which the insurgents are attempting to nullify, my subject may be considered a history of poets' antagonism to the system known as courtly love.

The principles of courtly love, as sung and presumably practised by the troubadours, and crystallized by Chretien de Troyes and his followers, formed an elaborate code of homage on the part of the lover, combining the service of a feudal vassal with the worship of a religious devotee.[1] Ac-

[1] See L. F. Mott, *The System of Courtly Love,* Boston, 1896, and W. G. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower,* Boston, 1913.

cording to this system the lady, as a perfect being, occupied a position of superiority so exalted that she was not required to give her lover the slightest recompense for his devotion; she "receives or rejects the proffered homage, and grants or withholds her love as she might grant or withhold a flower or a jewel." [2] Though any favors she might see fit to bestow were, of course, gratefully received, the lover had no right to demand them from her, and he could make no more honorable end than to waste away from unrequited passion. The number of deaths resulting from this complaint, if the poetry of the time may be taken as an accurate register, was truly appalling.

Love itself, and womankind in general, were extolled for their benign influence upon their disciples, since the lover, having set himself up an idol, quite naturally wanted to make it appear as splendid as possible if only to justify himself in his own eyes. "This devotion ennobles him who pays it. . . . The lady's influence benefits all who approach her." [3] "Courtly love was exalted under the system as a virtue which ennobled those who practised the art. . . . Strangely enough, the 'good' was all on one side. If this love was like mercy, which 'blesseth him that gives and him that takes,' it is not so stated in the manual of Andreas [Capellanus]. This again is due to the high position held by woman in the society of the time, and the reverence with which she was regarded. From her lofty place, as the perfect being, she dispensed favors which were at the same time the reward of noble deeds and the incentive to further effort." [4]

Although the name of courtly love is hardly known to-

[2] Mott, p. 7.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[4] Dodd, p. 8.

day except to scholars, the tradition, of course, has never disappeared; it is a thing inherent, and its underlying ideals have always been a predominant theme in poetry. But there has always been an undercurrent of opposition, gaining strength at times until it could meet its enemy on almost equal terms, and dwindling again until it was represented only by a very wee, small voice proclaiming the struggle of the masculine ego against ignominious bonds. It is this opposition, then—its various phases, its rise and fall—that I mean to trace through English poetry, with an eye to its literary relationships and obligations, as well as to the influences which have wrought changes in it since its first appearance.

Such a survey might almost be called a study in masculine unoriginality, so marked a resemblance do most of these verses show to other examples that have gone before them, and so noticeable is the influence of fashion on their manner and matter. The tone of rebellion has varied, to be sure, according to the mood of the poet and the vogue of the time, but, whether the voice be bitter and violent or nonchalant and gay, its utterances still do not redound greatly to the credit of the male half of the human race. The serious outbursts are often shamefully vituperative or lachrymose; the nonchalance of the others shows only too frequently as a studied pose. Hardly any of them rank high as poetic productions, though the light-hearted ones may occupy a fairly honorable place among *vers de société*. As for the latter, I have good authority for treating them as a subject worthy of consideration. "It would be unfair to the lyric," writes Professor Schelling, "to exclude from its domain that admirable variety of verse which has of late been denominated *vers de société*. Here, although, as

one of its most successful exponents has put it, 'a boudoir decorum is, or ought always to be, preserved; where sentiment never surges into passion, and where humor never overflows into boisterous merriment,' there is yet abundant opportunity for the display of some of the daintiest graces of the poetic art. The line of demarcation is difficult to draw." [5]

The field being so large, however, a division into light verse and serious verse will not suffice for purposes of scrutiny. I propose to divide the examples by subject-matter into the six or seven chief types according to which the material naturally groups itself, and to trace the history of each type chronologically, with liberal quotation. Although these types stand out with considerable clearness, there are of course a great many cases in which they overlap, or in which two or more of the conventional themes are contained in a single poem. A revolt against the poet's lady, for example, is sometimes accompanied by a resolution to forsake love altogether; a poem against women in general frequently includes an attack upon one woman in particular, etc. To avoid repetition, a poem will ordinarily be discussed under the type to which it primarily belongs, but in the appendix it will be listed under every classification for which it is qualified.

In the selection of material I have followed two principles of limitation which must be mentioned. In the first place, it seems both inadvisable and impractical to go outside the main stream of English poetry for examples; the difficulty, of course, lies in determining just where the "main stream" has its banks and where the auxiliary rivulets begin, to say nothing of the merely transient raindrops

[5] F. E. Schelling, *The English Lyric*, Boston, 1913, p. 7.

that leave no impression at all. This calls for some arbitrary distinctions, which are not rendered any easier by the fact that the amorous revolts of well-known writers usually rank among their least creditable efforts, while those of fourth- and fifth-rate poets frequently have fewer bad points than anything else their authors have turned out. This brings the real poets and the would-be poets, occasionally, into confusing proximity. I shall confine my illustrations, as far as possible, to the works of men whose names a person with a tolerably wide knowledge of English poetry may be expected to have heard at one time or another. I list in the appendix all the examples I have found, however bad, and some of the extremely minor figures have to be brought into the text now and then for the sake of background. Needless to say, I include only verses which purport, at least, to be authentic revolts, representing the author's actual feeling at the moment: that is, I exclude songs that appear in dramas or novels, speeches of characters in dramas or novels, etc.[6] The question of the validity of even the ostensibly lyrical poems as indices of the author's real feelings will be discussed presently.

As for the second principle of discrimination, it must be understood that I reject those verses which are written exclusively against marriage. This omission is in full accord with my plan to deal with the revolt against the traditions of courtly love, for the prophets of that cult held that

[6] I have observed this distinction as far as possible, but cannot guarantee that no pieces of this sort have slipped in. Songs originally written for novels or plays were frequently printed among the writer's poems, and still are, without any mention of their source. Even Suckling's "Why So Pale and Wan?" comes from his tragedy *Aglaura,* where it is called "A little foolish counsel . . . I gave a friend of mine four or five years ago, when he was falling into a consumption"; but not one anthology in ten mentions the fact.

love and marriage were not only separate, but absolutely incompatible. This does not mean that the courtly lover, wooing his mistress in verse, very often made an actual attack upon marriage; he simply did not mention it at all. I follow his example in separating love and marriage, for obviously an attack on the latter is not necessarily an attack on the former; in fact, the satire of marital troubles, always a popular theme among humorists, seldom ends in a repudiation of the lady in question, but usually confines itself to a grumbling against the petty irritations of the married state. Whenever a poem expresses an actual revolt against love in the abstract, against an individual lady who has hitherto enjoyed the poet's affections, or against the principle of eternal faith and ungrudging service to the lady, I include it even if it has to do with the writer's wife or with matrimony itself (e. g., Denham's "Friendship and Single Life against Love and Marriage"); if, however, it is directed merely against matrimony and does not violate the regulations of the courtly-love system, it lies outside my province.

In conclusion, I owe it to myself to say that the following study, though it might indeed be called "as *un*gallant a gloss, upon so trifling a text, as ever was written," should by no means be considered a ponderous anti-feminist document. It is a mere anatomy of revolt, an unbiased compilation of others' sentiments, which, if any one reads it, is more likely to awaken an amused pity than to win militant recruits for the cause of revolt. I have, like Burton, "laboriously collected this *Cento* out of divers Writers, and that *sine injuria,* I have wronged no authors, but given every man his own." As regards the responsibility, therefore, "let Simonides, Mantuan, Platina, Pet. Aretine, and

such woman-haters bear the blame, if ought be said amiss; I have not writ a tenth of that which might be urged out of them and others."

II

Even before the system of courtly love had reached its greatest popularity the "silent hammers of decay" were at work on it. The chief trouble was that it left hardly anything to the lover's own discretion; it told him what qualities he should possess—notably courtesy, humility, generosity, and constancy—and specified in great detail the manner in which he was to exercise these virtues. Manuals of instruction, more or less like Ovid's *Ars Amatoria,* became both numerous and popular. The romances were filled with rules of guidance for the conduct of love-intrigues. In this very standardization, this systematic arrangement of love-procedure, lay the causes for the downfall of the order; it could not last long after its artificiality became so apparent that even its ornamental value could not excuse it. Even for the troubadours "love was an art to be practised rather than a passion to be felt. It was largely a matter of behavior. . . . Naturally, the literature which drew its inspiration from such love was devoid of spontaneity and real feeling." [7]

The heyday of courtly love, nevertheless, lasted well into the sixteenth century. It was somewhat refined, to be sure, by an admixture of Platonism, which was really only a somewhat more idealized form of courtly love. In spite of all the lofty protestations of the troubadours, the old *cavalier servente* in actual practice had usually expected a

[7] Dodd, pp. 2–3.

definite and material return for his attendance. What Platonism really attempted was a restoration of idealism and feeling to the conventionalized and worldly forms of courtly love.

The theory of Platonism as expressed in literature, however, seems to have been as far above the average practice as the avowed principles of most of the troubadours had been above their real conduct. The Platonists, in fact, went to even greater extremes than had their predecessors in deifying love and womankind; some of them etherealized love to such a degree that they rendered it inaccessible, and renounced it (or affected to renounce it) altogether.

The result of these two literary vogues, both of them carried to absurd extremes, was a considerable body of poetry more or less obnoxious to the taste of sensible people, particularly after the novelty had long since worn off. On the one hand were the representatives of the courtly love traditions, combing the universe for conceits to express the beauty of their mistresses, and whining out their eternal complaints and lamentations, as John Davies said, "to their own shames, and Poetry's disgrace"; [8] on the other hand were the Platonists, vaunting the complete detachment of their sentiments from all earthly taint. There were mutual borrowings, and the line between the two schools was not always clear.

It is impossible to say definitely when the reaction set in, but a hostile influence had certainly become very noticeable in love-poetry by the middle of the sixteenth century. Wyatt and Surrey, and others of their time, while they still cast the bulk of their work in the conventional mold of abject plaintiveness, ventured nevertheless—and

[8] Davies, *Complete Poems*, ed. A. B. Grosart, London, 1876, II, 55.

not infrequently—to deny that love was worth the trouble it caused, to shake off love's bonds, or to forswear their allegiance to the erstwhile mistress of their affections. The serious tone of these rebellious utterances shows that their writers appreciated the gravity of their offense against the old code, but many a poet nevertheless had the courage to write as a lover who, "having broken his bondage, voweth never more to be enthralled," or who "renounceth his cruel love for ever."

Encouraged by the example of these rebels, the next generation—the Elizabethan poets—took up the torch and carried it higher, with the result that champions of the old school began to look to their defenses. The excessive zeal of the latter in producing hundreds of sonnets in the old vein only damaged their cause still further. "The dissemination of borrowed sentiment by the sonneteers," says Sidney Lee, "and their monotonous and mechanical plagiarisms, had the natural effect of bringing their endeavors into disrepute. The air in England during the last years of the sixteenth century rang with sarcastic protests." [9] One might almost say that there were two camps—the rebels and the true men—except that the alignment of forces was by no means distinct: that is, one poet might, and usually did, fight on both sides, and both camps were represented in the works of a single poet. The champions of the old order still had the upper hand, for while a number of poets wrote consistently submissive love-verses, never once rebelling, hardly one of any importance proved a thorough-going revolutionary.

The rebel camp continued to gain strength, however, and with it a consciousness of its own power. The early

[9] *Elizabethan Sonnets*, ed. S. Lee, Westminster, 1904, I, cv–cvi.

rebels had hardly managed to conceal a certain diffidence in the awful solemnity of their attacks upon the august power of love, and they had commonly bolstered up these attacks with artificial devices such as alliteration, intricate stanza-forms, and internal rime. The later Elizabethans not only wrote more naturally, but even permitted themselves to treat the subject light-heartedly now and then. The old romantic love was occasionally burlesqued on the stage—notably in *As You Like It,* where the heroine herself tells that "men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love." [10] So the battle raged, with both sides pouring in reënforcements as rapidly as possible through anthologies, song-books, ballad-sheets, and volumes of poems. Many poets experienced internal struggles, which they set forth in great detail, concerning the real value of love, its relation to honor, the duties of a lover, etc. These were not very different from the disputes on the same questions in the medieval romances and courts of love, but there were more of them now, and the devil's advocates—*i. e.,* the rebels—were forces to be reckoned with, and not mere straw men set up to be knocked down.

Needless to say, there were well-nigh as many decisions reached in these affairs as there were poets, and an individual writer's efforts to propagate his own opinion did not make much stir when dozens of his fellows were doing the same thing. What really came of all this voluminous meditation on the subject, after a few decades, was a general satiety, a contempt for the whole thing, and a desire to hear no more about it for a long time. Love, they must have felt, cannot possibly be worth all the talk that is going on about it. Something of this attitude is reflected in

[10] Act IV, Scene ii.

the opening lines of Habington's *Queen of Arragon* (1640), where Cleantha enters saying:

> My lord, let's change the subject: love is worn
> So thread-bare out of fashion.

Thus popular opinion (as far as poetic opinion can be called popular opinion), however indirectly, tended to align itself with that of the rebels.

So it is, that, by the middle of the seventeenth century, we find poets in great numbers not only striking out for freedom from amorous servitude, but refusing to take love seriously at all. The revolt against traditional love in poetry never reached a greater peak either in degree or in numerical strength than it did while this mood was at its height. Toward love in the abstract the characteristic tone was one of patronizing superiority, sometimes of lofty scorn; love, metaphorically speaking, was a creature to be patted on the head like a child, so long as it amused, and to be hustled off as soon as it became troublesome. This feeling naturally extended also to individual love-affairs; a mistress might hope for attention only so long as she proved entertaining, and she could be sloughed off as easily as a garment. Times (or at least poetry) had indeed changed since the days when the lady received or rejected the proffered homage, and granted or withheld her love as she might grant or withhold a flower or a jewel.

While this mode of superiority and condescension was comparatively fresh, poets entered into it with as much zest as its essentially unemotional nature permitted, just as, when courtly love was young, its devotees had glowed for the principles of that system with what was probably a sincere fire. By the end of the seventeenth century, how-

ever—the analogy still holds good—the feeling had already begun to go stale, because the rebellious lover was just as hopelessly a slave to fashion as the courtly lover had been. Not that there was any noticeable falling off in the fashion's popularity as yet; it had simply been worked for all it was worth. Instead of adding new material, or approaching the matter from new angles, people for the most part only did over what others had done before them. The stream was running very thin, and the attempt to make it look like real stuff frequently led to mere rhetoric and absurdity. In other words, its popularity, like that of courtly love, had contained the seeds of its own undoing; the theme had become standardized, and so was doomed to decay.

The early eighteenth century found strong reactionary forces already at work. The better minds of the period were "fed up" with these pieces of amorous bravado as they flowed from the pens of third- and fourth-rate poets, who may always be counted on, of course, to run any good idea into the ground by over-use. They found that a steady diet of licentiousness in poetry could cloy the appetite just as surely as could a regimen of tearful complaints, and they began, therefore, to drop quietly out of the rebellious ranks. It was very well to say over again what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed, but even this method has limits, and the possibilities for new expression in the field of insubordinate love-verse—for the time being, at least—were small enough to discourage the most enterprising poet. We may look in vain for any sign of contumaciousness in the work of Pope.

This does not mean that a definite movement had set in, as yet, toward a rehabilitation of the old ideals. The stereo-

typed revolts of the poetasters simply stood side by side with the scrupulously correct verses (both in form and in sentiment) of Pope and his satellites, who, while they professed to feel "flames" and "transports" on occasion, did not incline to really impassioned love-poems, and generally avoided the whole subject in favor of satire and didacticism. The former subsisted by virtue of an impetus gained from preceding generations of English poets; the later modeled themselves zealously after Horace and Boileau. The two factions were homogeneous, at any rate, in their emotional sterility.

> Song from celestial heights had wandered down,
> Put off her robe of sunlight, dew and flame,
> And donned a modish dress to charm the town.[11]

The natural reaction against all of this coldness, of course, was the rise of the school of "sensibility," which attempted to restore feeling and emotionality to literature, and which led ultimately to the great Romantic movement.

> Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,
> And craved a living voice, a natural tone.[12]

Among the first outward signs of the new tendency was a marked seriousness of tone, in contrast to the easy sophistication of most pseudo-classical poetry. This mood communicated itself, before very long, to the writers of rebellious love-poems, who must have found the new atmosphere not a salubrious one, for their numbers fell off sharply. The new generation of poets, eager to exercise their emotions to

[11] William Watson, "Wordsworth's Grave," *Poems*, London, 1892, p. 139.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

the full—though still hampered somewhat by the formal restraint of slowly-dying classicism—turned joyfully to the traditions of romantic love, rubbed off a little of the accumulated rust, and began to parade their tender melancholy with all the delight of a boy who has recovered a long-lost jackknife. They diversified their emotions a little more than had the troubadours—they found inspiration in graveyards, in country villages, on beetling cliffs—but despite all their wanderings in search of stimuli for their tender passions, they found nothing, of course, that was really better suited to their purpose than *the* tender passion. To that they usually returned. Sighing became the fashion once more, and a man no longer needed to be ashamed of pledging his devotion till death and after, to a maiden who would not return it; on the contrary, we find only a few hardy spirits daring to rebel against the code of romantic love—and they probably had strong personal reasons to back them up.

From this point on, from a literary viewpoint, the story is practically a repetition of the cycle which had now been completed—the sentimental and Romantic poets corresponding very closely, in their attitude toward love, to the troubadours and Platonists with whom we began. While Romanticism was young and pulsing with life, this attitude, including both an adoration for the loved one and a reverence for love itself, partook of the freshness and sincerity that made the poetry of this age so memorable. But just as courtly love fell into unworthy hands, and thence into extravagance, and thence into sheer bombast, so its modern equivalent, having strutted its little hour upon the stage, passed downward through the hands of the audience to eventual degradation—only more rapidly, be-

cause the number of versifiers was now much greater, and such things deteriorate quickly with use. Just as the genuine emotions of the troubadours were replaced by the "smoky sighs, the bitter tears" of early Elizabethan love-poetry, the whole-hearted protestations of the great Romantics were followed by the dismal, inflated rantings of the early Victorians. Where the latter fell short of the Elizabethan sonneteers in extravagance of conceit, they strengthened themselves with cheap rhetoric, never using a short word when a long one would do, and making a futile attempt to reconcile boundless passion with perfect decorum. Even the few smaller poets who, for one reason or another, saw fit to act the part of rebellious lovers, cast their sentiments in the mold of the time—with a showy tragicalness that recalls some of Wyatt's efforts along the same line.

Toward the end of the century, along with the reaction against Victorianism in general, came a noticeable increase in the number of revolts against romantic love and its standards. The tone of these revolts, on the whole, does not precisely duplicate that of the Elizabethan verses of amorous defiance; the workings of modern poetical psychology are a trifle more complex. Besides, the productions of the past forty or fifty years are still too close to us to resolve themselves into types and movements with the neatness observable in literature that has been aged for a century or more. The general trend in rebellious love-verses seems, however, to have been a rising one at the turn of the century and for the first two decades following. Whether we have passed high tide and are turning toward the ebb again, is impossible to say. It is impractical even to attempt to characterize definitely the poetry representa-

tive of this latest insurgent movement, though there is some ground for supposing that it will have, when viewed from the proper distance in time, an aspect very similar to that of its prototype in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: that is, it will proceed from seriousness to nonchalance, and thence, perhaps, to mere mechanical versifying.

Such, then, is the cycle of convention and revolt as regards English love-poetry in broad perspective. That there are exceptions to its workings, in the shape of individual poets' expressions of personal emotions, goes without saying, but the evidence in support of the predominance of literary fashion in determining the use of this theme in poetry is overwhelming. To quote Aldous Huxley: "Love's psychological and physiological material remains the same, but every epoch treats it in a different manner, just as every epoch cuts its unvarying cloth and silk and linen into garments of the most diverse fashion." [13] Thus even the negative portion of the cycle—the virtual disappearance of rebellious love-poetry for a time—is of significance, for it can hardly be supposed that the proportion of faithless lovers has varied so greatly as has the proportion of songs expressing faithlessness. Rather, it was fashionable in one age to exploit one's rebellions in verse, and fashionable in another to keep them secret.

It will be noticed that the cycle has made approximately one and one-half turns—from the complete submissiveness of the troubadours to the widespread defiance of the Cavaliers and Restoration gentlemen and back again to the Romantic ideal of devoted love, and then to the rebelliousness which seems to be comparatively common in

[13] *Holy Face and Other Essays*, London, 1929, p. 42.

recent poetry. A gradual acceleration will also be noticed in the working of the cycle, for the last half-turn has required only about a century, while the first complete revolution extended over at least four centuries, and perhaps more. The explanation is to be found, I think, in the ever-increasing number of poets. Fashions have this virtue: that they no sooner become excessively common than they are replaced by others. Indeed, the very fact that an idea no longer meets with popular disapproval is sufficient to make many energetic minds drop it and search for a new and different one. Every advance in the number of practising versifiers entails a corresponding abridgment of the time necessary to familiarize the public with an idea, theme, or fashion, and consequently produces a more rapid turning of the wheel which brings now one vogue to the top, now another, but which seems to have introduced nothing strikingly new for so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.

III

Though I were never so strongly convinced of the importance of literary fashion in the field I have briefly sketched, I should still have to admit the probability of a connection with something more basic, more closely allied to the life of the succeeding ages. It would be unreasonable to suppose that the changes in literary fashion were entirely independent of changes in sociological, psychological, or moral conditions, which could easily be reflected both in the quantity and in the quality of lovers' revolts in poetry. On the other hand, to demonstrate such a connection in anything more than a general way would require a much

more exhaustive sociological inquiry than lies within the scope of this study—especially since the connection, except in a few individual cases, would be unprovable. Various literary phenomena *seem* to reflect traits of national character, or historical developments, but the case for determinism often depends on a liberal interpretation of the facts, and never succeeds in getting rid of all contrary evidence. In the present instance I intend to keep a middle course, merely pointing out certain probable relationships between English life and that portion of English poetry with which I am here concerned.

At the very outset arises the most dangerous question of all: does this rebellious attitude in love-poetry harmonize with the English national character? That is to say, should we expect to find it represented more fully in English than in French or Italian or Spanish or German poetry?—for it goes without saying that the standpoint of the rebellious lover, to a greater or less degree, belongs to human nature regardless of nationality. The obvious pitfalls connected with the answering of such a question may well deter us from advancing an opinion, but there is no reason why we should not cite the conclusions of some of those dauntless souls who have ventured, in face of all the difficulties, to make a comparative analysis of the Englishman's way of love. A certain Elizabethan poetaster named Willobie, for example, undertook to show "the several dispositions of the Italian, the Spaniard, the Frenchman, the German, and the Englishman, and how they are affected in love," [14] but his ideas on the subject, according to his commentator, were taken out of Cornelius Agrippa, and so may have been somewhat out of date even at the time of writing. At any

[14] *Willobie his Avisa*, ed. C. Hughes, London, 1904, p. 6.

rate, they throw no light on the subject for us. He seems to portray the Englishman as the most faithful of all, though somewhat slower than the others to become enamored in the first place.

Despite the fact that it occurs in a play, the most incisive comment on the subject is, in my opinion, the dictum of the French maid in Vanbrugh's *Provok'd Wife,* concerning the gallant conduct of her English lover: "*Voila un vrai Anglais! il est amoureux, et cependant il veut raisonner.*" [15] Consider this in connection with one of Rousseau's favorite principles: "*La seule raison n'est point active; elle retient quelquefois, rarement elle excite, et jamais elle n'a rien fait de grand. Toujours raisonner est la manie des petits esprits.*" [16] This would make it appear that the typical Englishman is not overly subject to what Burton called "Heroical Love," and that he may be unusually prone to break off love-affairs in defiance to the code of ideal gallantry. Such an argument, of course, is not to be taken too seriously.

As for actual statements to the effect that independence in love is a British trait, we have of course Wordsworth's word for it that

> A Briton even in love should be
> A subject, not a slave.[17]

And in connection with a stronger and more personal statement of the same amorous independence, by Wyatt, Mr. H. H. Child thinks "it is not fanciful, perhaps, to find such a sentiment characteristically English. The chivalric ideal, codified in Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano,* was . . . of

[15] Act V, Scene i.
[16] *Œuvres Complètes de J. J. Rousseau,* Paris, 1865, II, 294.
[17] *Works of William Wordsworth,* N. Y., 1919, VIII, 38.

great weight in this, the last century of chivalry in England; but there is, perhaps, something in our temperament that forbade its complete acceptance in the matter of the servitude of love." [18]

The weakness of such statements—apart from the general inadvisability of attempting to epitomize a national character so composite as the English—lies in the fact that they do not account for the rise and fall of the rebellious-lover motif in popular favor. If it is really an essential part of the English character, we should expect it to show up in considerable strength all the way from Chaucer to Osbert Sitwell, for the English character presumably was much the same in 1400 as in 1600, or in 1850 as in 1930. Furthermore, as we shall see when we come to study the examples, very many of these "characteristically English" outbursts are as a matter of fact only imitations of foreign and classical models, Horace and Catullus in particular being laid heavily under contribution.

In answer to this objection, of course, it might be urged that periods of dearth in amorous revolt were periods during which English national traits in general were coated over with foreign affectation. Certainly courtly love itself was imported from abroad, and the revolt against it, in Elizabethan times, probably did go hand in hand with a general renascence of Englishness in English life. But the second hegemony of courtly-love tradition—during the Romantic and Victorian periods—cannot be so easily explained. Even though foreign influences may have affected Romanticism, its triumph in England had mostly native earmarks; and as for the Victorian era, it is generally considered to represent the quintessence of Anglicism. This

[18] *Cambridge History of English Literature*, III, 193.

does not mean that the foregoing appraisals of the English attitude toward love are necessarily all wrong, but for obvious reasons neither they nor any other verdicts like them can be pressed too far.

It seems far more logical to look for influences among the changing social conditions in England during the various ages: in moral standards—especially those applying to sexual relations—in the position of women, and in the prevailing notions of gallantry. These are the costumes, so to speak, in which English character dressed itself from time to time; and while they are perhaps only a little less superficial than literary fashions, they furnish partial indices, at least, to the state of social life in England.

In the first place, the Elizabethan outbreak of lovers' revolts in poetry certainly coincided with a great moral reaction against love—a reaction brought on by the licentiousness of the courtly lovers, both in literature and in actual practice. The purity of their sentiments had been open to serious doubt even while they still professed ideal devotion, and in the afternoon of their popularity they became more and more unrestrained in their expression.[19] This looseness, and its effect in enticing readers to sinfulness, was vigorously attacked by the Puritans, notably by Stephen Gosson in his *School of Abuse*. It is not necessary to go into the dreary waste of Puritan pamphleteering; this opposition can be easily traced in the apologies which various poets felt called upon to make for the morals of their profession. The best known is that of Sidney, who speaks thus after having refuted two of the objections to poetry raised by Gosson and his allies:

[19] See E. Dale, *National Life and Character in the Mirror of Early English Literature*, Cambridge [Eng.], 1907, pp. 214–15.

Their third is, how much it abuseth men's wit, training it to wanton sinfulness and lustful love. For indeed that is the principal if not only abuse I can hear alleged. They say the Comedies rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits. They say the Lyric is larded with passionate Sonnets, the Elegiac weeps the want of his mistress, and that even to the Heroical, Cupid hath ambitiously climbed. . . . But grant love of beauty be a beastly fault, although it be very hard, . . . yet think I, when this is granted, they will find their sentence may with good manners put the last words foremost; and not say, that Poetry abuseth man's wit but that man's wit abuseth Poetry.[20]

Thomas Lodge, in his more hasty and less effectual reply to Gosson, had been forced to disclaim the work of the looser sort of poets:

I must arm myself now, for here is the greatest bob I can gather out of your book, forsooth Ovid's abuses, in describing whereof you labor very vehemently, terming him lecher, and in his person dispraise all poems: but shall one man's folly destroy a universal commodity? [21]

Giles Fletcher tells of the general discontent with love, and offers an explanation for it:

Love, in this Age, hath behaved himself in that loose manner as it is counted a disgrace to give him but a kind look. . . .

Two reasons hath made it a thing foolishly odious in this age. The one, that so many base companions are the greatest Writers. The other, that our English Genevian Purity hath quite debarred us of honest recreation.[22]

This criticism of the greatest writers is interesting, when we consider the opprobrious connotations of the word

[20] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, ed. G. E. Woodberry, Boston, 1908, pp. 58–9.
[21] *Defence of Poetry; Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. G. Smith, Oxford, 1904, I, 75.
[22] *Licia*, Epistle to Lady Molineux; *Elizabethan Sonnets*, ed. Lee, II, 26–7.

"companion" in Elizabethan English. He refers, doubtless, to men like Marlowe and Greene, who led notoriously dissolute lives, and who, if not "the greatest Writers," were at least among the most popular.

A practice of the courtly poets which, as Grierson suggests,[23] seemed particularly offensive to the religious element of Elizabethan society, was the setting up of their mistress as a divinity, whom they worshiped in terms borrowed directly from Christian theology. Vaughan regrets that "certain Authors have been so irreverendly bold, as to dash Scriptures and the sacred Relatives of God with their impious conceits; and . . . some of these desperate adventurers may (I think) be reckoned amongst the principal or most learned Writers of English verse." [24]

This Puritan antagonism, as the above examples show, was directed chiefly against the poetic conception of love, but this caused the poets to feel it all the more keenly. Romantic love, whatever its nature, was the only kind most of them knew—certainly the only kind they wrote about—and it is not inconceivable that this determined assault upon their deity should have led some of them to turn against it, whether in order to renounce it entirely or in order to free themselves from the domination of any individual ladies to whom they had paid homage as a part of their duty to love in the abstract.

But the revolt was not only a moral one; a great many men, with no Puritan leanings to speak of, took a purely intellectual dislike to the extravagant affectations of the courtly lovers, and began to place their sacrifices before

[23] H. J. C. Grierson, *Cross Currents in Eng. Lit. of the XVIIth Cent.*, London, 1929, p. 139.

[24] Vaughan, *Works*, ed. L. C. Martin, Oxford, 1914, II, 390.

the altar of another god, long neglected—namely, Reason. They subjected love to cold analysis, and found it wanting. Bacon's remarks are typical:

> In life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons, whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent, there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love; which shows, that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion.[25]

Reason was considered a manly virtue, and incompatible with love. A collection of irregular sonnets called *Alcilia,* celebrating the escape of a certain Philoparthen from the snares of love, was prefaced by "A Letter written by a Gentleman to the Author his friend," in which the gentleman speaks as follows:

> Friend Philoparthen, in perusing your loving folly, and your declining from it, I do behold reason conquering passion. The infirmity of Loving argueth you are a man, the firmness thereof discovereth a good wit, and the best nature, and the falling from it, true virtue. . . . Herein it appeareth you have made good use of reason, that being heretofore lost in youthful vanity, have now by timely discretion found yourself. Let me entreat you to suffer these your Passionate Sonnets to be published, which may peradventure make others possessed with the like humor of Loving, to follow your example in leaving.[26]

Thus it seems to have been the fashion not only to disparage love, and to renounce it, but to try to win others away from it as well. This desertion of love in favor of reason, which we shall see illustrated in many poems, may

[25] Bacon, *Essays,* "Of Love."

[26] *Alcilia,* by J. C. (1595), repr. in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft,* 1870, X, 163.

have been due partly to the fact that most English people were incapable of treating amorous conceits as lightly and imaginatively as did the Italians, from whom most of these conceits were borrowed—that they took these conceits seriously, and condemned as immoral or unreasonable practices what were originally mere figures of speech.[27] Thus Gascoigne complained bitterly of readers who, "having only learned to read English, interpret Latin, Greek, French, and Italian phrases or metaphors, even according to their own motherly conception and childish skill." [28]

Along with the moral and intellectual reaction came a movement which was ostensibly a revolt against courtly love, but which really amounted to no more than an attempt to infuse some idealism into the worldly, materialistic creed that the old system had now become. This innovation was Platonism, which began in Italy with Dante and Petrarch, but which did not obtain a foothold in England until the sixteenth century. When carried to extremes, it called for a complete renunciation of earthly love on the part of its devotees, but few of them even pretended to go so far. As a matter of fact, the real conduct of the Platonists seems to have been little more idealistic than that of the courtly lovers, and their affectations were if possible even more pronounced. While Platonism had its day as a mode of literary expression, it simply was not a workable system for the majority of Englishmen. Howell gives us a glimpse of it in operation:

F. C. soars higher and higher every Day in Pursuance of his Platonic Love: but *T. Man* is out with his, you know whom; he is

[27] I take this suggestion from L. Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, N. Y., 1902, p. 330.

[28] *Complete Poems of George Gascoigne*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, 1869, I, 9.

fallen into that Averseness to her, that he swears he would rather see a basilisk than her. This shows, that the sweetest Wines may turn to the tartest vinegar.[29]

These ethereal lovers came to be satirized on the stage, and poets bombarded them with sarcasms. John Cleveland bade them cease to "candy up" themselves.[30]

The hypocrisy of most of the Platonists, then, seems merely to have added fuel to the fire of opposition to love. But it must be remembered that this opposition came from two very different directions: on the one hand, from those who were morally shocked at the licentiousness of the times, and on the other hand, from those who were intellectually ashamed of the pretended self-abasement of the courtly lovers as well as of the sham idealism of the Platonists. While both of these may very easily have resulted in a large number of revolts against love in poetry, they exercised divergent influences upon the morals of the time. The former class, of course, tended to look askance upon love-making in general, and held to the austere Puritan ideal of conduct. The other group, however—which happened to be the aristocratic and fashionable portion of society—objected not at all to love-making, but simply to an exaggerated reverence for the abstract principle of love, or for a fellow-mortal however beautiful and accomplished. There was a decided downward trend in the morals of the class to which most of the poets belonged. "What had been gaiety in Elizabethan society became heartless frivolity in the reign of James I. . . . In the Court of James the number of open and notorious evil

[29] Letter of Feb. 3, 1637; *Familiar Letters of James Howell*, ed. J. Jacobs, London, 1890, p. 407.
[30] *Poems of John Cleveland*, ed. J. Berdan, N. Y., 1903, p. 78.

livers was great, and the best that can be said is that it was not so bad as the Court of Charles II." [31] Such conditions, of course, are inimical to chivalry, and the light attitude toward love, the Cavalier attitude, had begun to make a considerable showing in poetry even by the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Again we can trace the opposition to love without going outside the writings of the poets themselves. Thus William Habington comments, with a mixture of Puritan and Cavalier sentiments:

> When it [poetry] is wholly employed in the soft strains of love, his soul who entertains it, loseth much of that strength which should confirm him man. The nerves of judgment are weakened most by its dalliance; and when a woman (I mean as she is externally fair) is the supreme object of wit, we soon degenerate into effeminacy. For the religion of fancy declines into a mad superstition, when it adores that idol which is not secure from age and sickness. Of such heathens, our times afford us a pitied multitude, who can give no nobler testimony of twenty years' employment, than some loose copies of lust happily expressed.[32]

The Puritan point of view is represented by his objection to the worship of external beauty, which is not secure from age and sickness, but it will be noticed that he finds such "dalliance" not immoral but effeminate—an opinion which smacks decidedly of the Cavalier.

The Cavalier spirit undiluted is well illustrated in a letter of Suckling's, in which he offers his friend a cure for the "disease" of loving:

> Though your disease be in the number of those that are better cured with time than precept, yet since it is lawful for every man to practise

[31] *Social England,* ed. H. D. Traill, London, 1895, IV, 157–8.
[32] Preface to Poems; Chalmers' *English Poets,* VI, 443.

upon them that are forsaken and given over, which I take to be your state, I will adventure to prescribe to you; and of the innocence of the physic you shall not need to doubt, since I can assure you that I take it daily myself.[33]

What with this contemptuous bearing toward serious love, and the general flexibility of moral restraints among the aristocracy, it is not surprising that so many poets should have addressed verses of careless scorn to cast-off mistresses, or imperious demands for immediate surrender to the beauty who intrigued them at the moment.

The Puritan revolution, by reversing the position of the two main parties, put a temporary check upon love-poetry of all kinds. It would be unreasonable to suppose, however, that the overthrow of the monarchy brought about any far-reaching changes in the morality of the nation at large. The Puritans, now in authority, simply drove out most of that small class of people who had hitherto regulated the moral tone of polite literature, and forced the rest to conform to a more sober rule of life. When the Stuart family was reinstated, the manners of the court once more became the manners of polite society and of polite literature, and all was as before.

The immorality of Restoration times, if not greater than that of any other period, was at least more open. "Charles II's selfishness and duplicity led him to take a cynical view of the rest of the world, and through his influence cynicism became a mark of 'fine-gentlemanship.' " [34] The infidelity of lovers was positively glorified on the stage. While it had been portrayed often enough in the period before the Revolution, the playwrights had at least made a moral ges-

[33] *Poems, Plays, and Other Remains of Sir John Suckling*, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, London, 1892 (2nd ed. rev.), p. 180.

[34] *Social England*, IV, 479.

ture, by showing the faithless lovers repentant in the end; now, the most popular plays tended to prove directly or indirectly that true happiness in love varied according to the number of conquests made. Except as a game, love was held in even lower esteem than it was before. The hero of Mrs. Behn's *Lycidus, or the Lover in Fashion*, after having run the gamut of amorous experiences, sails away from the Island of Love and returns no more.

It is of the utmost importance to remember, however, that these were the manners not of England, but of the upper class in England, the class which produced most of the love-poetry. To quote Mr. Calverton: "Sex expression in Restoration literature, as in all literature, was determined by the social attitude of the class that the literature represented; the social attitude of the class was determined by its economic structure, its relationship with other classes, its situation of advantage or disadvantage. To say that Restoration literature was free in its approach to sex, unabashed in its descriptions, blunt, salacious, obscene, would be inaccurate, because the flood of religious and scientific literature that appeared was entirely the opposite in its style and tenor. Restoration drama, however, which was expressive of the aristocracy, was free in its descriptions, bold in presentations, bald in its dictions." [35] There was another class in England who frowned upon the licentiousness of the court, whose opposition became more and more strenuous as the morals of the court grew worse, and who eventually brought about a reaction in favor of continence and good behavior.

The first effects of the reaction were noticeable mainly in a purely superficial reform—that is, in the refining of

[35] V. F. Calverton, *Sex Expression in Literature*, N. Y., 1926, p. 74.

literature and the stage rather than in the improvement of actual moral conditions. Hints of this reaction may be seen as early as 1664, when John Wilson felt called upon to defend his use of coarse language in certain scenes of *The Cheats:*

> If there be anything in their language that may seem loose, be pleased to consider who they are that speak it, and then I hope you'll thus far absolve me as to say, I had as ill brought 'um in with a pair of beads at their girdles, as my Puritan constable with a feather in his cap.[36]

In 1668 Shadwell was already censuring the morals of the stage, and he intimated that even hardened playgoers had felt it necessary to blush at some of the things they saw, though they may have enjoyed such things well enough:

> In the Plays, which have been wrote of late, . . . their chief Subject is Bawdy, and Profaneness, which they call *Brisk Writing*, when the most dissolute of Men, that relish those things well enough in Private, are *shock'd* at 'em in Public: And methinks, if there were nothing but the ill manners of it, it should make Poets avoid that Indecent way of Writing.[37]

Shadwell made a few attempts to rectify this condition, and, characteristically, gave himself full credit for his virtuous intentions. Thus in the preface to *The Royal Shepherdess*—

> I shall say little more of the Play, but that the rules of Morality and good Manners are strictly observed in it; (Virtue being exalted, and Vice depressed) and perhaps it might have been better received, had neither been done in it: For I find it pleases most to see Vice

[36] *Dramatic Works of John Wilson*, London, 1874, p. 12.
[37] Preface to *The Sullen Lovers; Dramatic Works of Thomas Shadwell, Esq.*, London, 1720, I, 10–11.

encourag'd, by bringing the Characters of debauch'd People upon the Stage, and making them pass for fine Gentlemen, who openly profess Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, breaking Windows, beating Constables, etc. and that is esteem'd, among us, a gentle Gaiety of Humor, which is contrary to the Customs and Laws of all civilized Nations.[38]

It was probably not Shadwell or any other dramatist, however, who eventually managed to raise the moral tone of English drama and poetry. It was rather the gradual shifting of polite literature, in the last two decades of the century, from the hands of the nobility to the hands of the upper middle class, together with the restraining influence of William and Mary, the new rulers, who issued a proclamation against immorality shortly after they came to the throne. While neither the proclamation nor the growing power of the middle class seem to have had much immediate effect upon morals in life,[39] they did put a very noticeable curb on licentiousness in literature. Thus the Earl of Rochester's poems, which had apparently suited the taste of Charles II's courtier's in every way, had to be expurgated for the reading public of 1691. Their publisher at this date

assures us, he has been diligent out of Measure, and has taken exceeding care that every Block of Offence shou'd be removed.

So that this Book is a Collection of such Pieces only, as may be received in a virtuous Court, and not unbecome the Cabinet of the Severest Matron.[40]

If the severest matron of 1691 had a stronger stomach than her sister of 1850 was to have—and the inclusion of verses

[38] *Ibid.*, I, 218.
[39] *Social England*, IV, 592.
[40] *Poems, &c. on Several Occasions: with Valentinian, a Tragedy*, by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, London, 1691, Preface.

like "Fair Chloris in a Pig-sty Lay" [41] would seem to indicate that she did—that does not alter the fact that real efforts were being made to weed out impurities from literature. The first "Society for the Reformation of Manners," which was formed in 1692, met with little success in its efforts to improve social customs,[42] but Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698) brought about real reforms in the theater.

Now, this somewhat lengthy review of morals, literary and social, is not so far from the purpose as it may seem. We must understand the way in which the excesses of Cavalier and Restoration gallants (whose principles were highly conducive to the appearance of lover's revolts in poetry) led the Puritanical element in English society to change its attitude very radically: that class which had condemned romantic love because of the headstrong, unreasoning passions of the courtly lovers, were now thoroughly disgusted with the wantonness of the new age, and, in their desire to combat it, came to glorify sincere, fervent passion as the antipodes of the customs they detested. The triumph of this reaction was reflected very noticeably in love-poetry, by a return to seriousness and by a sharp falling off in the number of rebellious verses.

Poetry had to go through a purifying process, however, before it was deemed fit to express the high love from which it had so long been estranged. It had to purge away its earthiness by concerning itself, for a while, not with love at all, but with moral principles, although the new ideas of love were already circulating in more worthy

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[42] *Social England*, IV, 592.

quarters. Isaac Watts reveals this state of affairs, in pleading for the reinstatement of love in poetry—

> Perhaps there are some morose readers, that stand ready to condemn every line that is written upon the theme of love; but have we not the care and the felicities of that sort of social life represented to us in the sacred writings? Some expressions are there used with a design to give a mortifying influence to our softest affections; others again brighten the character of that state, and allure virtuous souls to pursue the divine advantage of it, the mutual assistance in the way to salvation. Are not the cxxviith and cxxviiith Psalms indited on this very subject? Shall it be lawful for the press and the pulpit to treat of it with a becoming solemnity in prose, and must the mention of the same thing in poesy be pronounced for ever unlawful? Is it utterly unworthy of a serious character to write on this argument, because it has been unhappily polluted by scurrilous pens? Why may I not be permitted to obviate a common and growing mischief, while a thousand vile poems of the amorous kind swarm abroad, and give a vicious taint to the unwary reader? I would tell the world that I have endeavored to recover this argument out of the hands of impure writers, and to make it appear that virtue and love are not such strangers as they are represented. The blissful intimacy of souls in that state will afford sufficient furniture for the gravest entertainment in verse; so that it need not be everlastingly dressed up in ridicule, nor assumed only to furnish out the lewd sonnets of the times.[43]

His diffidence in approaching the subject appears in his reference to love as "that state," and "that sort of social life"—circumlocutions demanded by the taste of the time, because the word "love" had been "unhappily polluted by scurrilous pens." The reputable poets of the early eighteenth century, when they wrote love-verses at all, took care to express only the chastest of sentiments; "come live

[43] Preface to *Horæ Lyricæ*, 1709; Chalmers' *English Poets*, XIII, 18–19.

with me and be my wife" replaced "come live with me and be my love."

It is highly interesting to notice, from this point on, the analogy with the cycle of literary morals beginning some time in the early Middle Ages and here completed. We may compare the poetry of the early eighteenth century —mostly didactic in purpose and outwardly chaste in sentiment—with the religious and didactic literature that preceded the age of chivalry. But the unemotional nature of this standard in both ages soon repelled the popular taste, and just as courtly love itself was probably a revolt against medieval asceticism, so the school of sensibility, the modern counterpart of courtly love, grew up in answer to starved human nature's craving for emotional food. The wheel of moral fashion, however, like that of literary style, was revolving at an accelerated speed, and the change that must have spread over at least a century in the early period was now completed in a decade or two.

The first sentimentalists, like the first courtly lovers, were probably sincere in their attitude—that is, they must have felt at least three-fourths of the ardor they professed. But, like their predecessors, they abused the fashion, and so much faster were things now moving that sentimentalism, by the time of Sterne, already had a gross taint of hypocrisy. No less a critic than Coleridge affirms it:

> All the evil achieved by Hobbes, and the whole School of Materialists will appear inconsiderable, if it be compared with the mischief effected by the sentimental Philosophy of Sterne, and his numerous imitators. The vilest appetites and the most remorseless inconstancy towards their objects, acquired the titles of *the Heart, the irresistible Feelings, the too tender Sensibility;* and if the Frosts of Prudence, the

icy chains of Human Law thawed and vanished at the genial warmth of Human *Nature,* who could help it? It was an amiable Weakness!

About this time, too, the profanation of the word Love, rose to its height.[44]

In Coleridge's attitude, and that of the late eighteenth century as a whole, may be seen a great deal of the feeling that actuated the Platonists in their attempts to purify and idealize the forms of courtly love. The early Romanticists objected not to the sentimental attitude toward love, but to the hypocrisy underneath it—they considered it a greater profanation than the scorn of the seventeenth century because it masqueraded as something pure and exalted, while real manners were little better than they had been a century before. The half-hearted efforts of the Augustans to reform manners in society as well as in literature were now renewed with real earnestness, and with much greater success. "As if to show that the reformers of 1800 stood exactly where the reformers of 1700 stood, there was Wilberforce's new society with the old title 'for the Reformation of Manners.' . . . In 1787 the king had issued a proclamation against vice, as William and Mary had done before him. . . . It was a serious, self-conscious time, a time when seriousness of purpose told to the full. Finish of manner was at a discount, but an outward moral decorum was expected. 'Private indulgences' were suffered so long as the public was not insulted by their exhibition. In 1768 a few persons 'of delicacy' had considered it shocking that the Duke of Grafton, then First Lord of the Treasury, should lead his mistress, Nancy Parsons, in triumph before the queen. In 1802 Fox had to announce his

[44] "Sensibility," in *Aids to Reflection,* Bohn's Stand. Lib., London, 1893, p. 22.

marriage to Mrs. Armistead before she could be received in society. Even the vices of the Prince of Wales and of the Duke of York were considered matter for regret." [45]

The rapidity with which the change took place is admirably brought out by the predicament in which a great-aunt of Sir Walter Scott found herself when, at the age of eighty, she tried to renew her acquaintance with the books she had enjoyed as a girl. She discovered that she was unable to read without shame a book which, sixty years before, she had heard read out for amusement in large circles consisting of the best society in London. The novels of Aphra Behn, which delighted her youth, had given way to those of Maria Edgeworth.[46]

Sentimentalism, like courtly love, died hard in some quarters despite its artificiality, but the better minds of the Romantic period saw through it and ridiculed its shams. Byron writes to a friend:

> Did you read of a sad accident in the Wye t'other day? A dozen drowned; and Mr. Rossoe, a corpulent gentleman, preserved by a boat-hook or an eel-spear, begged, when he heard his wife was saved—no—lost—to be thrown in again!!—as if he could not have thrown himself in had he wished it; but this passes for sensibility. What strange beings men are, in and out of the Wye! [47]

How was all of this seriousness and moral uplift reflected in love-poetry? Romantic love—love until death and beyond death—was now the fashion, and hardly a rebellious lover dared to show his head, for such things were associated with the wicked, unfeeling days of the preceding century. Once more a man might prostrate himself before

[45] *Social England*, V, 499–500.
[46] Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, V, 136–7.
[47] *Letters and Journals*, ed. R. E. Prothero, London, 1898, II, 165.

the deity Woman without losing the respect of his fellow-creatures; once more it was considered not unhandsome to pine away and die of unrequited passion. The disappointed lover had one refuge that had not been open to his Renaissance prototype: he might assuage his grief by communing with Nature—which, though it had not just been discovered, was comparatively recent as a major poetic theme—but to rebel openly against the godhead of love was a risky business.

The moral tone of the first Romantic generation, however, inevitably deteriorated after a short time. It could not keep pace with the exaggerated outward show of feeling which the later Romanticists put up to conceal their lack of spontaneity. "In a sense, it is true," we are told concerning this time, "female dress merely passed from one form of artificiality to another; the same may be said of the nation's ideas of morality." [48] Just as private life in the Restoration was probably not so evil as it was represented on the stage, life at the beginning of the nineteenth century was by no means so pure as it was pictured in literature. A man like Byron, of notoriously loose conduct, showed a most careful regard for the proprieties on the stage when he wrote to Dibdin:

> Is not part of the dialogue in the new piece a little too double, if not too broad, now and then? for instance, the word "ravish" occurs in the way of question, as well as a remark, some half dozen times in the course of one scene, thereby meaning not raptures, but rape.[49]

Wordsworth's reply to an inquiry as to the scarcity of love-lyrics in his work shows that he objected not to

[48] *Social England*, V, 498.
[49] *Letters and Journals*, III, 213.

"warmth" of actual feeling, but to the expression of such warmth in verse:

> Had I been a writer of love-poetry it would have been natural for me to write with a degree of warmth which would hardly have been approved by my principles, and which might have been undesirable for the reader.[50]

The celebration of Nature by the Romantic poets had even brought about a return to the pastoral fad, which had enjoyed such a vogue in Elizabethan days. To quote one writer: "Another objectionable feature of polite society at this period was an affected partiality for rusticity, which, although a survival of the eighteenth century, had little affinity with that healthy love of rural sights and rural sounds which inspired the homely muse of Thomson, of Cowper, and of Bloomfield. Every boarding-school miss was a Corydon or a Chloe, every hobbledehoy was an Adonis or a Damon." [51]

In other words, sentimentalism and Romanticism were going the way that courtly love and Platonism had gone; they still held sway as modes of expression, but their disciples were carrying them to extremes which, in the hands of less skillful writers, would be patently absurd. They did fall into such hands after the passing of the great Romantic generation, and knowing this, we have a premonition of their ultimate downfall.

We may even see, in Wordsworth's statement, a reflection of that very feeling which led the early Puritans to condemn "warm" love altogether because of the exceedingly ardent verses written in its name. Those "grave Philosophers" of

[50] Quoted in Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, London, 1910, p. 196.
[51] W. C. Sydney, *The Early Days of the 19th Century in England*, London, 1898, I, 162.

whom Gascoigne spoke—who, "wisely considering that we are all in youth more apt to delight in harmful pleasures than to digest wholesome and sound advice, have thought meet to forbid the publishing of any riming trifles which may serve as whetstones to sharpen youth into vanities" [52]—those very philosophers might have written these words from the preface of an 1851 song-book:

> The ordinary song-books, of which large numbers are annually, if not daily issued, at prices varying from one penny to a shilling . . . often include effusions which are objectionable to the right-minded, and unfit to be placed in the hands of the young. . . . Care has been taken to exclude immoral songs of every kind, and to include all songs unobjectionable in other respects, which have at any time been eminently popular.[53]

This moral reaction, as I suggested in an earlier instance, may have helped to remove romantic love from the pedestal on which the poets had placed it, for it taught that such love was a thing to be ashamed of, a thing not to be brought into respectable society without apologies. This feeling became so prevalent that it made the Victorian era truly an age of expurgation.

That the rebellion against this highly artificial code of morality did not come sooner was probably due to the fact that so many other matters were taking up people's attention—imperialism, evolution, religion, socialism, etc. While an Elizabethan poet, forbidden to write of love, would have been almost silenced, a Victorian poet who did not care to wage a campaign against the prevailing taboo could write on non-amorous subjects, and gain an audience too. If he did write love-verses, he generally expressed

[52] *Complete Poems of George Gascoigne,* I, 9–10.
[53] *The Book of English Songs,* [ed. Charles Mackay] 1851, Preface.

sentiments which were neither "objectionable to the right-minded" nor "unfit to be placed in the hands of the young"; and since the young were not to suspect the existence of any love except that which led to marriage and lasted eternally, the poet found it advisable to keep his rebellions to himself. If he felt that he simply must revolt, he did it with appropriate solemnity, making it clear that he had been led on to his undoing by a shameless jilt, whose duplicity he now saw in all its hideousness, and that although he might free himself from her power he would never be quite the same man again.

The general rebellion was bound to come, however, and even in the middle of the century there had been a few poets who, like the early Elizabethan rebels, had faced the issue boldly, though somewhat gravely, and had dared to defy the romantic code without any righteous self-justification. As for actual love-relationships, and the general attitude toward them, a definite opposition to Victorian standards set in during the last quarter of the century. People began once more to question whether the romantic ideal of chaste and everlasting love were really valid, and their inquiries showed them a wide discrepancy between theory and practice. Like the Elizabethans, they must have applied the test of reason to love, analyzing it, discussing it, and finding fault with it. As Arthur Symons said:

> The modern malady of love is nerves.
> Love, once a simple madness, now observes
> The stages of his passionate disease,
> And is twice sorrowful because he sees,
> Inch by inch entering, the fatal knife.[54]

[54] *Poems of Arthur Symons*, London, 1912, I, 132. By permission of William Heinemann, Ltd.

By the nineties, a rebellion against romantic love could be made without the risk of social ostracism for the poet. A number of poets, in fact, saw fit to rebel both against romantic love and against Victorian moral standards as a whole; they took themselves and their love-affairs quite seriously, as did Wyatt, Surrey, and the other poets who started the great rebellion in the sixteenth century. Their example, however, encouraged others to mutiny, and the effect of their combined strength was to introduce a new boldness, an effrontery, a nonchalance like that of the rebellious lovers of Cavalier times.

I do not intend to discuss the question, whether twentieth-century morals have been as much like seventeenth-century ones as twentieth-century rebellious love-poetry has been like that of the seventeenth century. The picture is too close at hand to be viewed with proper perspective. Here is the estimate of one critic, however: "The profanation of love by the sentimentalist has ceased. The language of Sterne, which moved Coleridge to indignation, moves Fashion only to laughter; all that antique talk of *sensibility* is held in derision, as out of date now as the fainting heroines of Thackeray and Dickens. Society today is more honest, more brutal. It has ceased to make any pretence to idealism. . . . Love is a joke, one of the amusements, one of the adventures, one of the sports, one of the recreations of society. To take it seriously is both provincial and dangerous. It must be treated as our fathers treated flirtation." [55] If this is an accurate analysis, then the resemblance to the seventeenth century is unquestionable.

There remains undiscussed one aspect of social life

[55] *The Glass of Fashion,* by a Gentleman with a Duster, N. Y., 1921, p. 144.

which might be expected to have a bearing upon the amount of rebelliousness in love-poetry: that is, the position of women at the various periods. I approach this subject with great diffidence, because I believe that the interrelation, if it does exist, can only be suggested, and not proved. While plenty of information is available on the subject of the political, legal, and economic status of women, these facts have only an indirect bearing, if any, upon our topic. We are concerned with something even more tenuous than what would ordinarily be called the social status of women: it is their position with regard to the current practices of gallantry, the amount of respect and consideration accorded to them in affairs of the heart. But, except in a few individual cases, the only evidence on this subject lies in the poetry itself—not an overly reliable source.

The books of etiquette immediately suggest themselves as sources of information, but I do not consider them at all trustworthy indices of the real feeling toward women. The general run of courtesy books tell a man only how he should act, not what he should feel; they reflect merely outward forms, and the outward forms of courtesy to women have changed very little, until recently, since the days of chivalry. Even in the Restoration, when reverence for women by their gallants was at its lowest ebb, an elaborate and ostensibly chivalrous courtesy was preserved. One spoke in the most affecting terms of one's "flame" to the lady who happened to be engrossing one's conversation; then one described it just as appealingly to the next lady. It is unlikely that many men at one time have ever fulfilled even the outward requirements of reverence for the whole female sex. The medieval knight worshiped womankind in

the person of his lady, perhaps, but did he revere the peasants' wives whom he saw along the road? Theoretically he did, but the consensus of opinion is against him.[56] If we looked for it we should probably find in all ages a criticism of this failure to live up to the letter of the code of gallantry; the best-known complaint is Lamb's essay on *Modern Gallantry.*

Thus it is that the average courtesy book, even in the seventeenth century, offers no hint of the contemptuous attitude toward women which certainly must have existed in the minds of the fashionable gentlemen whose manners these books were intended to reflect. We find it in Chesterfield's letters,[57] but these, it must be remembered, were not intended for publication. In one Elizabethan book of courtesy, translated from the Italian, it is admitted that a suitor's patience need not last forever if his mistress will not yield:

> It is well known that there is no man such an ass, but that continual bobs and repulses will make him soar away.[58]

Generally speaking, though, I think we need not hope to find in the courtesy books a key to the real feeling about women. I had rather take many other things as evidence—even such things as songs in plays, which, though they do not necessarily express the author's own sentiments, usually do fit in with the feeling of the audience. A song like "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?" for example, inserted for mere incidental entertainment and not as part of the plot, must naturally have been intended to fit in

[56] See, among others, Wilhelm Dibelius, *England,* London, 1930, p. 158.

[57] See Letter CXXIX.

[58] *The Civile Conversation of M. Steven Guazzo,* 1581, quoted by E. Sullivan, in *The Nineteenth Century,* June 1913, LXXIII, 1270–85.

with the spirit of its audience. Thus the following song from Habington's *Queen of Arragon* could not have been sung in a reputable theater, let us say, in 1790, but it harmonized well with the notions of gallantry prevalent in 1640—

> Fine young folly, though you were
> That fair beauty I did swear,
> Yet you ne'er could reach my heart:
> For we courtiers learn at school
> Only with your sex to fool,
> You're not worth the serious part.[59]

There is every reason to suppose that the character in whose mouth this song was put represents a typical gallant of his day. Later on, we find a charming lady—Millamant, in *The Way of the World* [60]—quoting Suckling's verses:

> There never yet was woman made,
> Nor shall, but to be cursed,

and speaking of their author, not in terms of opprobrium, but as "natural, easy Suckling."

More solid evidence, of course, can be advanced to prove the disrespectful attitude of the seventeenth-century gallant toward womankind. Sir Thomas Overbury thus describes the courtier at the beginning of the century:

> Occasion is his Cupid, and he hath but one receipt of making love. He follows nothing but inconstancy, admires nothing but beauty, honors nothing but fortune, loves nothing.[61]

[59] Act IV, Scene i.
[60] Act IV, Scene ii.
[61] *Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Sir Thomas Overbury*, ed. E. F. Rimbault, London, 1856, I, 53.

Farquhar gives a very similar picture in describing the *beau monde* of his day:

> These Sparks make Intriguing their Business, and Love only their diversion. They visit their Mistress as they go to the Park, because it is the Mode; and continue to sollicit her Favor, not thro' the Impulse of Passion, but because they have nothing else to do. Some other Motives there are to engage these Sparks in the Pursuit of a fair Lady; as for Instance; upon the Survey of his Rent Roll the Lover finds two or three Thousand a Year still unmortgag'd, sends down immediately to his Steward to screw up his Tenants to due Payments, and concludes with *Money conquers all Things.*[62]

Some anonymous writer summed up the matter neatly with a reference to William Harvey's discovery, then comparatively new:

> 'Tis now become a fashion
> To court all with equal passion
> And admirers now do prove,
> There is as well in love
> As in blood, a circulation.[63]

We may agree with John Selden that "more solid Things do not shew the Complexion of the times so well as Ballads and Libels." [64] In that case, there is no lack of evidence for us. To quote Fletcher: "Woman-baiting was a favorite sport of ballad-writers. John Chamberlain, writing to Sir Dudley Carleton on February 12, 1620, remarked that 'our pulpits ring continually of the insolence and imprudence of women; and to help forward, the players have

[62] In a letter; *Works of Mr. George Farquhar,* London, 1742, I, 53–4.
[63] *Covent Garden Drollery, 1672,* ed. M. Summers, London, 1927, p. 47.
[64] Quoted as motto by H. E. Rollins, *The Pepys Ballads,* Cambridge, Mass., 1930, vol. III.

likewise taken them to task; and so to the ballads and ballad-singers; so that they can come nowhere but their ears tingle.' " [65]

But if we attempt to explain all this, or to explain why, at another period, women became objects of reverence, we immediately find ourselves up to our neck in the waters of speculation. The distrust of women in early times, of course, is well known. "The Middle Ages, the age of Aristotle, had called woman *confusio hominis,* the 'confusion of man.' " [66] This was probably an intellectual rather than a moral distrust; it was the attitude of the philosopher, the ascetic, who saw in woman the greatest material temptation a man could encounter, and hence the greatest menace to the life of the intellect. It was perhaps as a reaction against this ascetic ideal that chivalry arose, elevating woman to the position of a deity. But it is questionable to what extent either asceticism or chivalry really affected the life of the times—that is, to what extent the philosophers really shunned the female sex, and to what extent the knight-errant really worshiped them as perfect beings.

We can say with more certainty, however, that the lax morality which accompanied the chivalric idealization of woman brought about a moral reaction, and that this reaction was directed largely against women merely for the reason that men were in the habit of blaming them for all of the trouble in the world. The old example of Eve's downfall could always be used to advantage, and the ideas of the ascetic philosophers were simply taken over and used as moral arguments now that the latter were needed. In proportion as morality degenerated, women became

[65] J. B. Fletcher, *The Religion of Beauty in Woman,* N. Y., 1911, p. 170.
[66] Fletcher, p. 23.

objects of more vituperation on the part of the Puritanical clergy, as well as of others who may have been less sincere in their condemnations. By Elizabethan times this kind of writing was distressingly common, as we may tell from occasional arguments in defense of women. Thus in the preface to *Willobie his Avisa* the writer tells us:

> I must worthily reprehend the envious rage, both of heathen poets, and of some Christian and English writers, which so far debase the credit and strength of the whole sex, that they fear not with lying tongues wickedly to publish that there are none at all that can continue constant, if they be tried. Hereof sprang these false accusing speeches of the old Poets
>
> *Ludunt formosæ, etc.*
> *Rara avis in terris, etc.*
>
> This false opinion bred those foul-mouthed speeches of Friar Mantuan, that upbraids all women with fleeting unconstancy. This made Ariosto and others to invent and publish so many lewd and untrue tales of women's unfaithfulness.[67]

It will be noticed, how the nature of the objection has changed: women are no longer reproached for enticing men's thoughts from spiritual things, but for their inconstancy toward their lovers. This quality had played a large part in the late romances.

Now, the danger of being jilted by his mistress naturally alarmed the gallant far more than had the danger of being spiritually contaminated by his intercourse with a damned sex. Even if he had never heard of Aristotle, he had probably read some of those writings which prompted the remarks quoted above from *Willobie,* or which, even before, had taken up the attention of "The Nut Brown Maid" and her lover—

[67] *Willobie his Avisa,* 1594, ed. C. Hughes, London, 1904, p. 8.

He

Be it right or wrong, these men among
On women do complain;
Affirming this, how that it is
A labor spent in vain
To love them wele; for never a dele
They love a man again:
For let a man do what he can
Their favor to attain,
Yet if a new to them pursue,
Their first true lover than
Laboreth for naught; for from her thought
He is a banished man.

She

I say not nay, but that all day
It is both written and said
That woman's faith is, as who saith,
All utterly decay'd.[68]

The chances are that this general mistrust led many gallants to forsake their mistress, to break the rules of courtly love by writing against womankind, or to abandon love altogether. As for the more intelligent type of gallant, he could still find vestiges of the old philosophical contempt for woman: witness Burton's cruel dictum that

as much pity is to be taken of a woman weeping as of a goose going barefoot.[69]

There may have been other factors which would confirm the gallant in his refusal to trust women. In the early seventeenth century he might have been merely following the example of his sovereign: James I, we are told, "de-

[68] *Oxford Book of English Verse*, pp. 39–40.
[69] Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Bohn's Popular Library, London, 1923, III, 145.

spised women almost as cordially as he did tobacco." [70] Then there was the economic situation already revealed in the quotations from Overbury and Farquhar. The expenses of fashionable life at the court so impoverished the gallants that they were forced to take a highly mercenary view of love-affairs, and pay their court to dowries rather than to damsels. This condition is curiously reflected in a few ballads, such as the one entitled

> The Wiving Age
> Or
> A great complaint of the maidens of London,
> Who now for lack of good Husbands are undone,
> For now many Widows though never so old,
> Are caught up by young men for lucre of gold.[71]

By the time of the Commonwealth, most of the moral and philosophical writing against women had disappeared; the dispute about feminine character now "broadened into moral councils on love and marriage, and is free from pruriency. . . . The greatest number of pamphlets merely ridicule the inconstancy, vanity, or caprice of women. . . . The satire has lost the venom of the preceding age." [72] I have seen no explanation for this decrease in Puritan anti-feminism, and have none to offer, unless it be that the malice of earlier days had simply burned itself out. But obviously, if the stern Puritans no longer thought it necessary to launch diatribes against the opposite sex, the gallants of the next generation would not condescend to lose their tempers over the matter. They indulged in what Farquhar called "light harmless censure," [73] probably be-

[70] Fletcher, p. 169.
[71] *A Pepysian Garland,* ed. H. E. Rollins, Cambridge [Eng.], 1922, p. 234.
[72] *Cambridge History of English Literature,* VII, 440.
[73] *See below,* p. 236.

cause they thought that women were "not worth the serious part."

The explanation for the upward trend which began to appear in the gallant attitude toward women at the end of the century is also a matter of interpretation. Personally, I think it indicated nothing more than a satiety of the old views; just as this age moved toward a purification of literature because its appetite was cloyed with licentiousness, so it turned from a careless misogynism that no longer gave any pleasure, and for the sheer novelty of it began to rebuild the pedestal which had been knocked from under woman's feet over a century before. Certainly no immediate change in the real feeling toward women appeared; Chesterfield gives proof of that. But having set up the idol of femininity in literature once more, men eventually turned their eyes on reality, and found a most awkward discrepancy. Their women were still the ignorant, frivolous, ornamental creatures of the last century, though they were being addressed in poems as nymphs and goddesses. What to do? Admit that the poets were wrong? Never. Build up reality to fit the ideal, or at least to approach it. And so the long-neglected matter of women's education was taken up by Steele, Addison, and others; the "bluestocking" movement began, and women were soon made over to such an extent that a poet, without too great a stretch of imagination, could speak of them as perfect beings. It was a return, in more than one way, to the conditions in which Platonism had flourished—when women of acknowledged intellectual powers had held *conversazioni* and discoursed on the marriage of true minds.

From here on, as in the case of morals and literary vogues, there is merely a repetition of the cycle, with de-

tails modified by changed living conditions. The show of exalted respect paid to women in Victorian times—a mere fiction, carried over, like the pastoral cult, from the preceding age—gradually broke down as the difference between outward appearance and real feeling became more and more apparent. Of woman in the last few decades it can be said, as it was said three hundred years ago: she was once our superior, but is now only our equal. Once more the decay of the romantic tradition, which demands at least a show of deference for woman as a sex, may be considered to have paved the way for a modern army of rebellious lovers.

That this discussion is inconclusive I am well aware, for I predicted that it would be so. It is an interesting aspect of the subject, however, if only because it does offer such a clear field for theorizing; perhaps some day the history of woman as seen through the eyes of the gallant will be written, but until then each man may legitimately foster his own theory. One recent interpretation of the relationship between romantic love and the social position of women seems to me very incisive—albeit a trifle cynical—and I take this opportunity to mention it. It is a view suggested by André Maurois, who sums it up in two chief axioms:

1. In a society where men and women are almost constantly separated by the functions and manner of life of the two sexes chivalrous love comes into being.

2. In a society full of leisure, where men and women live much together, we may expect love largely composed of coquetry, together with a certain facility of morals which will finally make an end of chivalrous love.[74]

[74] A. Maurois, "Past and Future of Love," *Harper's*, June 1928, CLVII, 70–72.

While this is too facile a generalization to be proof from all attacks, it would explain a large part of the history of romantic love and of its opposite, amorous rebellion. One does not have to be an iconoclast to say that romantic love is based on an illusion—however willingly the "victim" may acquiesce in it—and that the illusion is fostered by a wide separation in the *business* of life of the two sexes. In the days of chivalry, for example, while men and women may not actually have lived apart, their spheres of activity were widely different, love-making being almost the only point of contact between them; a knight who spent most of his time in female society would have been considered an effeminate weakling. In the seventeenth century, on the other hand, men and women—of the idle classes—were together at all hours of the day and night, and had ample opportunity to discover each other's shortcomings. In the second half of the eighteenth century, again, when cultured men turned back to more serious business, the sexes tended once more to separate socially, because women were not sufficiently educated to share the political and intellectual interests of the other sex.[75] Even in the Victorian era the ideal woman was not able, or expected, to take an active interest in her husband's affairs. Love was still her whole existence. It is so no more, and behold—the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries give us the spectacle of a new Cavalier rebellion in love-poetry. Worse theories than this have been propounded.

IV

Whether the principal factor governing the treatment

[75] See A. F. Fremantle, *England in the Nineteenth Century, 1801–1805*, Macmillan, 1929.

of the lover's revolt is one of poetic fashion or one of sociological fashion, an unavoidable question still arises when we come to deal with individual examples: namely, to what extent are these poems to be taken seriously, as expressions of the poet's real feeling? Can we or can we not reasonably assume, when a poet "describeth and forsaketh love," that he really does abandon the passion, even temporarily? and should we believe, when he "forsaketh his unkind mistress," that he actually does send such a mistress packing, or even that he had a mistress at all? Although the tendency in interpreting lyric poetry seems to favor the acceptance of every statement as a sincere expression of the poet's mood at the time of writing, it is yet neither revolutionary nor original to ask, as someone asked more than three centuries ago:

> Are poets then the only lovers true?
> Whose hearts are set on measuring a verse;
> Who think themselves well blest, if they renew
> Some good old dump, that Chaucer's mistress knew.[76]

Absence of biographical data prevents us in the majority of cases, of course, from ascertaining whether any given poem, loving or unloving, was written to embody the poet's real feeling toward a real woman. Occasionally such information is forthcoming, and frequently we may make a shrewd guess; where only internal evidence is available, we can but wish for the assistance of someone like Burns, who said:

> I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a

[76] Sidney (?), in *Elizabethan Sonnets*, ed. S. Lee, I, 120.

warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery and conceit from real passion and nature.[77]

If Burns—the only person I know even to have laid claim to such a power—had only applied his touchstone to the existing body of "love-composition," both conventional and rebellious, and had recorded his findings, he would have rendered an inestimable service to this study. As we cannot pretend to enjoy this infallibility of perception which, like Ithuriel's spear, will cause an author's thought to start up in its true form no matter how deeply it may be disguised in a poem, we must needs avoid dogmatic opinions concerning the sincerity of all but a very few of these verses.

This does not mean that I do not regard a very large number of them as poses, although conclusive proof may be lacking. In the first place, many of them sound so hollow and unnatural as to ring false even to the less finely attuned ear of one who has not been "all along a miserable dupe to love." The highly exaggerated pangs which the Elizabethan poets profess to have felt in breaking the bonds of love come to mind as the most obvious illustration; these poets often fell no whit behind the courtly lovers in dolorousness of tone and artificiality of conceit. Exaggeration of either attitude, as William Walsh wrote somewhat later, awakens doubt as to the writer's sincerity:

I am satisfied that Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, were in love with their mistresses while they upbraid them, quarrel with them, threaten them, and forswear them; but I cannot believe Petrarch in love

[77] In a letter; *Complete Works of Robert Burns*, ed. Alexander Smith, London, 1868, p. 294.

with his, when he writes conceits upon her name, her gloves, and the place of her birth.[78]

Along with inflation of sentiment, at this time, went artificiality of form and imitation of matter, both of them elements not usually associated with sincerity in writing. Some go so far as to say that a poem which merely imitates another cannot be regarded as an expression of the author's feelings under any circumstances: thus the imitative quality in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella,* according to Mr. Lee, "destroys most of those specious pretensions to autobiographic confessions which the unwary reader may discern in them." [79] While this does not necessarily follow—for a man may quite conceivably imitate, or even translate literally, let us say, Horace's Ode to Pyrrha by way of commemorating his own escape from an erstwhile mistress, if he feels that he cannot improve upon it—yet the charge of imitation, if proved, naturally arouses grave doubt as to his sincerity.

As a matter of fact, there is ample evidence to show that a lyric poet may assume a pose for one reason or another even when he is not imitating any literary model, and particularly when writing love-verses, whether *pro* or *contra.* "A man may write of love and not be in love," says Giles Fletcher, "as well as of husbandry and not go to the plough, or of witches and be none, or of holiness and be flat profane." [80] The fact is, as Cowley explained long ago, that nearly all poets write love-verses simply because it is expected of them, although some of them may not actually experience any of the sentiments about which they write.

[78] Preface to Poems; Chalmers' *English Poets,* VIII, 403.
[79] *Elizabethan Sonnets,* I, xliii.
[80] *Licia,* Epistle To Lady Molineux; *Elizabethan Sonnets,* II, 28.

Poets are scarce thought freemen of their company, without paying some duties, and obliging themselves to be true to love. Sooner or later they must all pass through that trial, like some Mahometan monks, that are bound by their order, once at least in their life, to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. . . . But we must not always make a judgment of their manners from their writings of this kind. . . . It is not in this sense that poesy is said to be a kind of painting; it is not the picture of the poet, but of things and persons imagined by him. He may be in his own practise and disposition a philosopher, nay a stoic, and yet speak sometimes with the softness of an amorous Sappho. . . . He professes too much the use of fables (though without the malice of deceiving) to have his testimony taken even against himself.[81]

No less a person than George Gascoigne takes occasion to warn his readers that many lovers' revolts have been written in jest, and he names one familiar poem as an example:

Since all comparisons are odious, I will not say how much the arraignment and divorce of a Lover (being written in jest) have been mistaken in sad earnest. . . . What! should I stand much in rehearsal how the L. Vaux his ditty (beginning thus: *I loathe that I did love*) was thought by some to be made upon his death bed? [82]

A similar statement is made by Michael Drayton, who suggests that a lover may pretend to cast off his love in jest, merely in order to conceal his own pain:

> I hear some say, "This man is not in love!"
> "Who! can he love? a likely thing!" they say.
> "Read but his verse, and it will easily prove!"
> O, judge not rashly, gentle Sir, I pray!
> Because I loosely trifle in this sort,
> As one that fain his sorrows would beguile,
> . . . . . .

[81] Cowley, Preface to Poems; Chalmers' *English Poets*, VII, 45.
[82] *Complete Poems of George Gascoigne*, I, 9.

> Ye shallow cens'rers! Sometimes, see ye not,
> In greatest perils some men pleasant be.[83]

Perhaps the most convincing reason for skepticism with regard to the sincerity of love-verses is the apparently widespread practice of writing them for other people. This is avowed by the poets themselves. Thus, to quote Gascoigne again:

> Because these Posies grow to a great bundle, and thereof also the number of loving lines exceedeth in the Superlative, I thought good to advertise thee, that the most part of them were written for other men. And out of all doubt, if ever I wrote line for myself in causes of love, I have written ten for other men in lays of lust. . . . I have heard of an honest plain-meaning Citizen, who . . . came home to comfort his wife, and told her that he had heard of one which dwelt at Billingsgate, that could help all men. Even so (good Reader) I was a great while the man which dwelt at Billingsgate. For in wanton delights I helped all men, though in sad earnest I never furthered myself any kind of way.[84]

By "loving lines" was commonly meant lines that had to do with love, whether for or against, and since the "Posies" include several rebellious utterances, and "the most part of them were written for other men," it is reasonable to assume that some, at least, of these insubordinations were merely a part of Gascoigne's stock in trade in the capacity of the philanthropic resident of Billingsgate.

Robert Burns, whether out of the kindness of his heart or because of a paucity of material, freely volunteered his services as a writer of love-verses (of conventional ones, to be sure, but considering how prolifically he wrote the other kind too, I see no reason to believe that he would have re-

[83] *Idea,* XXIV; *Elizabethan Sonnets,* II, 193.
[84] *Loc. cit.,* I, 15.

fused to make rebellions to order). He wrote to James Johnson:

> Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as whether she be rather black or fair, plump or thin, short or tall, &c., and choose your air, and I shall task my muse to celebrate her.[85]

Richard Le Gallienne, like Gascoigne, disavows personal responsibility for the feelings expressed in a volume of his love-verses, and compares himself to a scrivener in the market-place:

> 'Tis not my own heart here
> That doth so often seem to break and burn—
> O no such thing!—
> Nor is it my own dear
> Always I sing:
> But, as a scrivener in the market-place,
> I sit and write for lovers, him or her,
> Making a song to match each lover's case—
> A trifling gift sometimes the gods confer! [86]

On the strength of such avowals, made by the poets themselves, we need not hesitate to question the autobiographic significance of a goodly proportion of these poems; for what one poet may confess to have done, that may another poet—yea, dozens of other poets, unfortunately—attempt. Walsh would have felt just as skeptical about the sincerity of the Victorian poets who denounced their mistresses in lines of bombast all compact, as he felt about that of Petrarch and his followers. Then Tom Moore, who abandoned more ladies in his verse than most

[85] *Complete Works of Robert Burns*, p. 434.

[86] Verses prefixed to *A Jongleur Strayed*, N. Y., 1922. By permission of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

men woo, must have served more than once as "the man which dwelt at Billingsgate" or the "scrivener in the market-place."

On the other hand, the fact that a man writes verses against the customary love-tradition does not necessarily mean that he is fabricating incidents, or assuming a pose. Many of these poems must have commemorated real disappointments, must have expressed the poet's real determination—for the time, at least—to forsake love, or to abandon the lady of his affections. Just as some of them are patent affectations, others ring with whole-hearted earnestness. Grosart, comparing the inflated effusions of his own day with the simpler Elizabethan verses on the same theme—specifically with "Change thy mind since she doth change," by the Earl of Essex—remarks: "What passion, pungency and realism in these old songs compared with the vapid nothings of our present songs!" [87] Massingham, the editor of an anthology of seventeenth-century verse, after observing that many minor poets of that period assumed the pose of rebellious lovers as a matter of fashion, adds that "with better poets the same air and attitude are frequently the means to releasing a very real irony and bitterness of soul." [88]

Occasionally a poet takes the trouble to tell us that his writings represent actual experience, though he is more apt to leave the question unanswered. Thus Michael Drayton, in flat contradiction to his statement quoted above, says of his poems:

> My verse is the true image of my mind.[89]

[87] *Poems of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex*, ed. A. B. Grosart, 1872, p. 93.
[88] *XVIIth Century English Verse*, ed. H. J. Massingham, London, 1919, p. 328.
[89] Dedicatory Sonnet to Poems, 1613; Chalmers' *English Poets*, IV, xviii.

The author of *Alcilia,* a series of poems including both pledges of faith and declarations of independence, is careful to defend himself from the charge of posing, which might easily be brought against him on account of the contradictory feelings he expresses:

> These Sonnets following, were written by the Author, (who giveth himself this feigned name of Philoparthen as his accidental attribute) at divers times, and upon divers occasions, and therefore in the form, and matter they differ, and sometimes are quite contrary one to another, which ought not to be misliked considering the very nature, and quality of Love, which is a passion full of variety, and contrariety in itself.[90]

Thomas Flatman, whose love-verses show a great deal of the fractious spirit, tells us that he resorted to rime

> when any Accident hath either pleas'd or vex'd me beyond my power of expressing either my Satisfaction or Indignation in downright Prose. . . . And I believe from what follows it may be discern'd when 'twas Fair Weather, when Changeable, and when the Quicksilver fell down to Storm and Tempest.[91]

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt admonishes his readers that in *The Love-Sonnets of Proteus* he "lays bare what was once his heart, to the public." [92] While none of these people go so far as to assume responsibility at any one time for all the statements made in their poems, they do aver that each individual expression was true at the time of writing. No more, of course, can be demanded of a lyric poet.

Even if we may believe in a poet's sincerity when he vouches for it himself, however—an assumption which is

[90] *Alcilia,* repr. *Jahrb, d. Deutschen Sh.—Gesellsch.,* X, 167.
[91] *Poems and Songs,* London, 1674, Preface.
[92] *The Love-Sonnets of Proteus,* Preface to 5th ed., London, 1885.

by no means undebatable—the great majority of rebellious lovers expose their candor at least to suspicion by the conflicting ideas set forth in their own poems. Even though we may agree that love is "a passion full of variety, and contrariety itself," we find difficulty in reconciling this manifesto of Carew—

> How ill doth he deserve a lover's name,
> Whose pale weak flame
> Cannot retain
> His heat, in spite of absence or disdain— [93]

with this ultimatum to Phillis, also by Carew—

> Think not your conquest to maintain
> By rigor or unjust disdain;
> In vain, fair nymph, in vain you strive,
> For love doth seldom hope survive.[94]

The same doubt arises in connection with Suckling, who will now tolerate no hint of revolt—

> Honest lover whatsoever,
> If in all thy love there ever
> Was one wav'ring thought, if thy flame
> Were not still even, still the same,
> Know this,
> Thou lov'st amiss,
> And to love true,
> Thou must begin again, and love anew.[95]

but for himself says—

> Ere I'll die for love, I'll fairly forego it.[96]

[93] *Poems and Masque of Thomas Carew*, ed. J. W. Ebsworth, London, 1893, p. 21.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[95] *Poems*, etc., I, 41.
[96] *Ibid.*, I, 50.

It is hard to give Herrick full credit for this pious wish—

> O Jupiter, sho'd I speak ill
> Of womankind, first die I will;
> Since that I know, 'mongst all the rest
> Of creatures, woman is the best— [97]

when we know that he describes woman elsewhere in this fashion—

> Something made of thread and thrum;
> A mere Botch of all and some.
> Pieces, patches, ropes of hair;
> In-laid Garbage everywhere.[98]

These are but a few examples of the discrepancy which may be found in the various poems of almost every man whose work will be represented here. I do not know of a single poet who is consistently rebellious.

Now, the less extreme contradictions may often be explained by reference to the changeability of love itself, but repeated shocks are bound to weaken credulity, and it would be inhuman not to doubt the absolute genuineness of a poet who can write the most ardent pledges of everlasting faith side by side with messages of defiance. This does not mean, of course, that the rebellious poems are necessarily the sham ones; a man may don the mask of a courtly lover as well as that of a nonchalant Cavalier. But it is only fair to remark that in the majority of cases only one or two revolts occur in the midst of a swarm of conventional love-poems—a fact which might be construed as an indication that the latter are generally more sincere than the former. In this connection, too, William

[97] *Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. F. W. Moorman, Oxford, 1915, p. 245.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Walsh's dictum should be recalled: "that Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, were in love with their mistresses while they upbraid them, quarrel with them, threaten them, and forswear them."

When such contrarieties occur, the case for autobiographical sincerity must rest upon the theory that the conflicting elements in a poet's work represent different stages of his life—that he bade defiance to Cupid, let us say, in his youth, but succumbed to him later on. Thus Wilfrid Blunt, in those Protean sonnets of infidelity, "lays bare what was once his heart, . . . but what for good or evil is his heart no longer." [99] Thomas Watson, an Elizabethan poet, acknowledges a similar change of heart:

> In prime of youthly years as then not wounded,
> With Love's impoisoned dart or bitter gall:
> . . . . . .
> I took delight to laugh at Lovers' folly,
> Accounting beauty but a fading blossom.[100]

Many poets, on the other hand, state plainly that they have spent their youth in "loving folly," and have achieved independence from love only with the coming of old age. Thus Akenside:

> Away! Away!
> Tempt me no more, insidious love:
> Thy soothing sway
> Long did my youthful bosom prove:
> At length thy treason is discern'd,
> At length some dear-bought caution earn'd:
> Away! nor hope my riper age to move.[101]

[99] *Loc. cit.*
[100] *The Tears of Fancie,* repr. E. Arber, London, 1870, p. 179.
[101] *Works in Prose and Verse of Mark Akenside,* New Brunswick, N. J., 1808, II, 101.

Landor claims immunity by virtue of his gray hairs:

> While Time allows the short reprieve,
> Just look at me! would you believe
> 'Twas once a lover? [102]

Likewise Thomas Hardy:

> At last I put off love,
> For twice ten years
> The daysman of my thought,
> And hope and doing.[103]

Thus we cannot generalize and say that the rebellious attitude is a youthful trait, outgrown along with other symptoms of adolescence, any more than we can maintain that it is a characteristic of riper years. Perhaps, if we knew the chronology of the works of the individual poets, we might find one of these attitudes more widespread than the other, but except for the very modern period the order of composition is nearly always a matter of great uncertainty, and is often entirely undiscoverable.

To sum up the question of autobiographical truth in these lovers' revolts: where evidence exists, the individual cases are divided about equally between true rebellions and poses, but in the majority of cases, since we lack evidence, we can judge only according to the degree of conviction carried by the verses themselves. It is my personal opinion that the poses are in the majority. It would be unfair, however, to dismiss the subject without observing that there is a difference between autobiographic truth and artistic truth—or shall we say, between autobiographic sincerity

[102] *Works of Walter Savage Landor*, London, 1868, II, 651.
[103] *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, N. Y., 1926, p. 220.

and artistic sincerity. In the one the author suggests to the best of his ability the emotions which he himself has felt. In the other he projects himself into another personality, and presents, just as faithfully, the emotions of that other being. Artistically, of course, the two types of sincerity are equal in value, though the second is perhaps more difficult than the first. Thus Gascoigne, writing love-poems for all of his friends, is not necessarily less sincere, from an artistic point of view, than Blunt, who wrote only for himself.

So much for the background, historical, social, and philosophical. It must not be supposed that the subject is altogether as profound or as serious as the nature of this introduction would indicate; the rebellious lover in English poetry, if judged impartially, is a phenomenon more valuable as a curiosity than as a jewel in the national diadem. With this warning, then, let us proceed to the poems themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

Farewells To Love

OUR review of the rebel ranks begins, quite properly, with that company who have abjured love altogether. This includes both the congenitally immune, who have never felt the passion and never intend to, and those who have reached immunity, as it were, through innoculation with the disease. The latter are the more numerous, and put forward a greater variety of reasons for their antagonism—as old age, the triumph of reason, desire for a quiet life, etc.

With regard to this type, it must be understood that I do not include expressions of the Platonic attitude, except in so far as it has prompted the poet to renounce the love of woman altogether. To call the general run of Platonic sentiments—idealized and intellectualized as they ostensibly were—a revolt against love, would be to misinterpret them; they were, for the most part, a "religion of beauty in woman," a beauty not of spirit, but of form and feature.[1] Furthermore, the adherents of this doctrine, even in spurning the transient desires of mortal men, nearly always professed an abiding and undivided love for some particular mistress. A protestation of devotion cannot be called a farewell to love, no matter on how high or how ethereal a plane this devotion is said to exist. Only the extremists went so far as to say, with Sidney:

[1] See J. B. Fletcher, *The Religion of Beauty in Woman*, N. Y., 1911, Chapter I.

Leave me, O Love, that reachest but to dust.[2]

I do not presume to set up an arbitrary standard, however, to which a poet's conception of love must conform; rather, I accept his own definition, expressed or implied, as long as love of woman is plainly meant. Whenever, and for whatever reason, he renounces the love of woman, he comes into our province.

The history of the type begins with Chaucer. Old English verse, as it has come down to us, contains very little that can be called amorous at all, and that little is concerned rather with true devotion than with love's overthrow. But in "Merciles Beaute," a triple rondel ascribed to Chaucer and generally included among his works, the third stanza celebrates the author's escape from the passion that ruled him in the first two. "Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat," boasts the poet, "I never thenk to bene in his prison lene." Now that he is free, in fact, he counts love "not a bene." At least he renders justice in admitting that the severance is mutual:

> Love hath my name y-strike out of his sclat,
> And he is strike out of my bokes clene
> For evermo.

It is a plain case of withdrawal due to disgust, and as such the forerunner of scores of later poems on the same theme. Though probably a mere paraphrase of a French original,[3] it is by no means a discreditable piece of verse. It should

[2] *Astrophel and Stella,* Sonnet CX. To avoid repetition, only the names of poems will be given in footnotes from now on, when they do not appear in the text. Complete bibliographical references will be found in the lists in the appendix. When no name appears in the text or footnotes, the first line of the quotation serves to identify it.

[3] Perhaps from Deschamps or Willamme d'Amiens—R. D. French, *A Chaucer Handbook,* N. Y., 1927, p. 115.

also be noted that the author—be he Chaucer or not—reverses the usual order of ideas in such poems, by submitting to love in the first two stanzas and rebelling in the third. Later writers, when they changed their attitude in the midst of a poem, generally began with bluster, but returned cowed in the end.[4]

More to be reckoned with among the valedictions to love is the declaration of Gower at the end of his *Confessio Amantis,* which is a veritable handbook of courtly love theory and practice. Having rehearsed the deeds of many famous gallants, he asserts that his Muse bids him write no more of love which turns the heart from reason, and that he will therefore take his final leave of such love:

> And thus forthy my final leve
> I take now for evere more,
> Without makynge any more,
> Of love and of his dedly hele.
> For his nature is so divers,
> That it hath evere som travers
> Or of to moche or of to lite,
> That pleinly mai noman delite,
> But if him faile or that or this.

The difference between this and the Chaucerian poem lies chiefly in the degree of seriousness with which the two authors treat the subject of their withdrawal from the amorous lists. In "Merciles Beaute" the attitude is that of a released prisoner, celebrating his escape from a jailer for whom he cares not a bean, but under whose power, we feel, he will probably fall again at the first opportunity. In the *Confessio Amantis,* on the other hand, the author,

[4] For examples, see below, under "Pseudo-revolts."

after making a thorough exposition of the art of courtly love, reflects on it, finds that it profits naught, and therefore lets it go. This "is nothing more than we should expect of a man in whom the practical was so prominent, a man who decided to treat the subject of love only after having concluded that it was a task greater than he could compass to stretch his hand up to the heaven and set the world in order." [5] Regarded from another point of view, Chaucer's attitude sounds youthful and swaggering; Gower's suggests rather an old man who has thought the matter out. Between the two of them, they strike the keynote for at least half the anti-amorous poems in English.

The fifteenth-century imitators of Chaucer and Gower, though they borrowed extensively from their masters in other ways, and even rebelled against some of the conventions of chivalric love now and then, did not go so far as to renounce it altogether. This fact, together with the fact that only one example apiece of such a manifesto is to be found in the work of the masters themselves, seems to indicate that the writing even of a plagiarized renunciation of love implies some originality of temperament.

The next figure in the line of rebels, however, takes up the cudgels just as if there had not been a lapse of a century during which English poetry had been at a low ebb, and renunciations of love non-existent. William Dunbar, using the language of Chaucer to express the ideas of Gower, writes "Of Luve Erdly and Divine":

> Now culit is Dame Venus brand;
> Trew Luvis fyre is ay kindiland,
> And I begin to undirstand,
> In feynit luve quhat foly bene.

[5] W. G. Dodd, *Courtly Love in Chaucer and Gower,* Boston, 1913, p. 90.

Anti-amorous sentiment seems to have accumulated gradually during the first half of the sixteenth century, until Wyatt and Surrey finally opened the sluice-gates and let out the flood. Preliminary trickles are seen in the work of Alexander Scott, Alexander Montgomerie, and Thomas, Lord Vaux. Scott still has energy enough to send love packing, though it has left him "bot skin and bon":

Leif luve and lat me lief allone
At libertie, subiect to none;
For it may well be sene upone
  My bludless blaiknit ble;
The tormenting, in tyme bygon,
That skerss has left bot skin and bon
  Throw fremmitness of the.

. . . . . .

This is nocht the first ouerthraw
  That thow hes done to me.
Bot of the now I stand nocht aw,
Sen ressoun doïs my benner blaw
  Aganis the feid of the.

Montgomerie was not in such a run-down condition physically, and so could address Cupid with more sturdy defiance:

King cupaid, gracles god of glaikis,
  Sen thou takis pastym for to pyne
Thay sarwandis that sick plessur takis
  To leif lyk sempell slaives of thayne,
Thow sell nocht hurtt this hairtt of myne;
  I sell lett all thai flanis fle bay:
Schott on, thow sall bott trawill tyne:
  Deirtt in thai nok, I the defay.

Lord Vaux composed a lugubrious "Dyttye or Sonet" beginning:

I loathe that I did love.

It must have been popular, for it appears in *Tottel's Miscellany* and other collections, and snatches of it are sung by the gravedigger in *Hamlet*.

These poems foreshadow several of the dominant characteristics of the great mass of verses on this theme which appeared in Elizabethan times. In the first place, the ultra-serious, even gloomy tone—meant to convey the idea that the author was at his last gasp when he composed the lines—became a fashionable pose. In sharp contrast to this apparent depth of tragic emotion, however, we have the obvious artificiality of the verse itself: note, for example, the difficult rime-scheme of Scott's stanza, and the alliteration in all three of the poems. Such devices, of course, distinguish most early Elizabethan verse, not merely the lovers' revolts, but when carried to extremes in any case they make one skeptical of the reality of the author's passion. The old-age motif, seen in Vaux—whose poem, in *Tottel's Miscellany,* bears the title, "The Aged Lover Renounceth Love"—was to be used by a great many poets in explaining their immunity from love. Lastly, Scott's verse illustrates the appeal to reason as an antidote against love—an expedient of which Elizabethan and seventeenth-century men were exceedingly fond.

Wyatt, in his declarations of war upon love, displays the extreme seriousness which characterizes nearly all of his verses, be they descriptions of spring, offerings of his heart to his lady, or renouncings of hardly escaped love. One

poem, to be sure, simulates light-heartedness, and has the refrain:

> Now ha! ha! ha! full well is me,
> For I am now at liberty.[6]

But the laugh sounds hollow and out of place, particularly after the solemn tone of the rest of the poem, and the whole is merely a translation of some Italian verses by Serafino. As a rule, the names which Tottel gave to Wyatt's pieces indicate their nature pretty well: "The Lover Curseth the Time when First He Fell in Love"; "He Repenteth that He Had Ever Loved"; "The Lover Having Broken his Bondage, Voweth Never More to Be Enthralled"; etc. They are all songs of experience, in which he reviews his encounters with Cupid, likens such occupations to the climbing of rotten boughs, and decides to leave them forever. Oddly enough, Tottel seems to have been something of a rebellious lover himself, in a vicarious way, for he gave titles suggesting a lover's revolt to several of Wyatt's pieces that do not fit such names. The poem which he called "The Lover Taught, Mistrusteth Allurements," for example, while it may possibly be addressed to a mistress, sounds as though it were meant simply for a friend, and a male friend at that; the poem which Tottel headed "The Lover Rejoiceth Against Fortune that by Hindering his Suit had Happily Made Him Forsake his Folly" probably has nothing to do with love at all. Of course, Tottel may simply have been doing what the producer of moving pictures or the writer of tabloid newspaper headlines does to-day—arousing public interest in an intrinsically harmless article by means of a flamboyant tag.

[6] "He Rejoiceth that He Had Broken the Snares of Love."

Wyatt, like Lord Vaux, sometimes attributes his state of mind to advancing years:

> Displease you not, my doting time is past;
> And with my loss to leave I must agree:
> For as there is a certain time to rage,
> So is there time such madness to assuage.[7]

It is interesting to note that he turns, elsewhere, to "Senec, and Plato," [8] and attributes his new-found freedom to their influence. We shall find this pair solacing more than one love-lorn poet.

As for the Earl of Surrey, two of his poems represent unsuccessful attempts to achieve an attitude of complete independence. In one he poses as "A Careless Man Scorning and Describing the Subtle Usage of Women Toward their Lovers":

> Wrapt in my careless cloak, as I walk to and fro,
> I see how love can show what force there reigneth in his bow.

Cupid, needless to say, has no terrors for the "careless man." Speaking as a lover who "Describeth and Forsaketh Love," however, Surrey loses some of that carelessness, and flouts his mistress and the tender passion as though he had been brought suddenly and painfully into contact with the tears of things:

> Farewell! thou hast me taught
> To think me not the first
> That love hath set aloft,
> And casten in the dust.

[7] "The Lover Abused Renounceth Love."
[8] "A Renouncing of Love."

Whether owing to the impetus given by Wyatt, Surrey, and the other contributors to *Tottel's Miscellany*, or to some external influence, the verse treatments of this theme now sprang up with ever-increasing rapidity, appearing not only in the identified works of individual poets, but quite commonly in anthologies, song-books, and ballad-sheets. The latter show unmistakably what a remarkable vogue the theme enjoyed—remarkable because it came at a time in which so many exquisite love-lyrics were being written. As the renunciations of love became more numerous, their quality also showed a decided improvement; for while it must be admitted that none of the treatments up to this time show great excellence either of poetry or of wit, yet among the many examples occurring in the verse-collections and song-books of the next few decades are some with considerable charm—together, of course, with many that are poor and uninspired. Only a few can be quoted here.

Not much credit is due to the author of such verses as these, from *A Flourish upon Fancy: As Gallant a Gloss, upon so Trifling a Text, as Ever Was Written:*

Fond Fancy, now farewell!
  Thy lodging likes me not:
I served thee long, full like a slave,
  Yet little gains I got.[9]

Or these, from the same book:

Ah! feeble Fancy, now
  Thy force is nothing worth:
Thou hadst me in thy Castel once,
  But now I am got forth.[10]

[9] "A Farewell to Fancy."
[10] "In Despite of Fancy."

Nor can one sympathize deeply with him who wrote "A Proper New Dity" in *A Handful of Pleasant Delights,* with the refrain:

Fie upon Love, and all his laws.

The Phœnix Nest affords two samples, of only moderate appeal. One of them, written by Thomas Lodge, begins:

Accurst be Love, and they that trust his trains.

The other runs as follows:

The time, when first I fell in love,
Which now I do lament,
. . . . . .
Doth make me solemnly protest
As I with pains do prove,
There is no time, year, day, nor hour,
Nor minute, good to love.

Someone in *The Garland of Good-Will* protests less solemnly against the fruitless vexations of love, but repents his past indulgences, and renounces them for the sake of his personal ease:

True love is little regarded,
And often goes unrewarded:
Then to avoid all strife,
I'll resolve to lead a single life,
Whereby the heart is not offended.[11]

An "Invective against Love," by a mysterious A.W. in Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody,* warns us that "all is not gold

[11] "A Song in Praise of a Single Life."

that shineth bright in show," while a "Defiance to Disdainful Love," by the same writer, declares:

> Now have I learn'd with much ado at last
> By true disdain to kill desire;
> . . . . . .
> Proud love, now do thy worst and spare not,
> For thee and all thy shafts I care not.

This A.W. was willing to fight to the death against Cupid, for he sings: "If love be life I long to die." [12] Then he constructs a pattern-verse in the shape of an altar, entitled "An Altar and Sacrifice to Disdain, for Freeing him from Love." After heaping up figurative offerings upon this altar, he ends with the pious declaration:

> All these I offer to Disdain,
> By whom I live from Fancy free;
> With vow, that if I love again,
> My life the sacrifice shall be.

But the lyrics in the song-books generally reach a much higher level of poetic merit. In William Byrd's *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs* we encounter the spritely verses:

> Though Amaryllis dance in green
> Like Fairy Queen,
> And sing full clear;
> Corinna can, with smiling, cheer.
> Yet since their eyes make heart so sore,
> *Hey ho! chill love no more.*

There too is a smoothly written "Farewell to Love" which has been attributed at various times to John Lyly, Thomas Deloney, and Sir Walter Ralegh, which begins:

[12] "Dispraise of Love, and Lovers' Follies."

Farewell, false Love, the oracle of lies,
A mortal foe, an enemy to rest.

In Byrd's *Songs of Sundry Natures* is another verse attributed to Lyly,[13] in which the writer admits that "younglings" may find Cupid an agreeable companion, but begs that he himself may be spared a sight of the boy:

Ants have galls, so hath the bee his sting:
Then shield me, heavens, from such a subtle thing! [14]

By the time most of the Elizabethan song-books were published, the prevalent attitude toward the renunciation of love was becoming more light-hearted, and accordingly we find a note of nonchalance in most of the songs. Witness this from Yonge's *Musica Transalpina:*

False Love! now shoot and spare not!
Now do thy worst! I care not!

Or this very similar one from Thomas Morley's *First Book of Ballets to Five Voices:*

Shoot, false Love I care not;
Spend thy shafts and spare not! [15]

From Robert Jones' collections come several delightful bits. The author of one of them taunts Cupid playfully:

[13] Concerning these and other songs attributed to Lyly by his editor, R. W. Bond, Mr. Bullen's comment is appropriate: "Mr. Warwick Bond has claimed for John Lyly some of the Poems in Byrd's *Songs of Sundrie Natures;* but Mr. Bond's zeal in collecting a quantity of anonymous verse (excellent, indifferent, and execrable)—from song-books, entertainments, anthologies, and MSS.—and fathering it all on the author of *Euphues,* has surely outrun his discretion." (A. H. Bullen, *Some Shorter Elizabethan Poems,* Westminster, 1903, xii).

[14] "When Younglings First on Cupid Fix their Sight."

[15] Elizabethans seem never to have tired of riming "care not" and "spare not."

Little boy, pretty knave, hence, I beseech you,
For if you hit me, knave, in faith I'll breech you.[16]

Another addresses him in mocking terms:

Soft, Cupid, soft, there is no haste,
. . . . . .
Let us part friends before thou go.
. . . . . .
My life thou mayst command sans doubt,
Command I say,—and go without.
And if that I do ever prove
False and unkind to gentle Love,
I'll not desire to live a day
Nor any longer—than I may.
I'll daily bless the little god,—
But not without a smarting rod.
Wilt thou still unkindly leave me?
Now I pray God,—all ill go with thee! [17]

"Once did my thoughts both ebb and flow," remarks another of the contributors to Jones' song-books, describing his love-symptoms, but the closing stanza leaves no room for doubt as to his present state:

Once in my ear did dangling hang
A little turtle-dove,
Once, in a word, I was a fool—
And then I was in love.[18]

The ballads of the time, which are even better indices of the popular taste than are the song-books, include several treatments of this theme—two of them, at least, being

[16] *Second Book of Songs and Airs*, "Love's God Is a Boy."
[17] *The Muses' Garden of Delights.*
[18] *Ibid.*

much better than the average verses that appeared on broadside sheets. The title of one is "The Faithful Lover's Resolution, being Forsaken of a Coy and faithless Dame," and its words run thus:

> Though bootless I must needs complain,
> My fate is so extreme,
> I lov'd, and was belov'd again,
> Yet all was but a dream:
> For as that love was quickly got,
> So 'twas as quickly gone;
> I'll touch no more a flame so hot,
> I'll rather lie alone.

This song appeared in later collections, and was even imitated by Sir Walter Scott.[19] The other ballad is the well-known complaint, presumably spoken by a rustic swain, and beginning:

> Oh, what a plague is love! How shall I bear it?

It runs on for many verses until the harassed shepherd finally takes a courageous resolve:

> Oh my heart! Oh my heels! Fie on all wenches!
> Pluck up thy courage, Giles; bang him that flinches!
> Back to thy sheep again,
> Thou silly shepherd swain,
> Thy labour is in vain!
> *Phillida flouts me.*

Burton quotes the refrain of this ballad, in his treatise on the cure of love-melancholy, to typify the mood of a discontented suitor.[20]

Among the identified Elizabethan poets who declared

[19] Scott, "The Resolve."
[20] *Anatomy of Melancholy*, London, 1923, III, 266.

themselves free from love's bondage, the most formidable was the scholarly Thomas Watson, with his *Hekatompathia, or Passionate Century of Love, Divided into Two Parts, whereof, the first expresseth the Author's sufferance in Love: the Latter, his long Farewell to Love and all his Tyranny*. The second part of this work, indeed, is the most extensive indictment of love that has come from the pen of any English poet, though it is very far from being the most inspired. The lengthy and pedantic introduction prefixed to each sonnet, explaining its sources, analogues, purpose, and method of construction, is usually more interesting than the sonnet itself, but it indicates a lack of spontaneity that may well cause the reader to doubt whether Watson meant all that he said. Most of the poems are simply pieced together from the works of foreign writers; the task of compilation alone must have been an arduous one, except that, as the closing motto of the book reminds us, "the labor is slight, where Love is the paymistress."

Twelve of the sonnets are renunciations of love—a goodly number, which would carry more conviction if Watson were not so often obviously more interested in the form than in the matter. The first of the group, for example, is a highly intricate bit of pattern-verse, in the shape of a pillar, with various ornamental eccentricities which the writer enumerates with unconcealed pride.[21] Among other things it is a double acrostic, the first and the last letters of each line, when read vertically, spelling *Amare est insanire*. This requires some wrenching of orthography, which, together with the extraordinary arrangement of lines to fit the pattern, makes the piece almost

[21] *Hekatompathia*, LXXXI.

unintelligible. It is printed in ordinary form on another page, so that the uninitiated reader shall not be left entirely in the dark. Although the formal artificiality of this poem is unusual even for Watson, the same tendency may be noticed elsewhere. Of Sonnet XCIII, for example, he states: "In the other two staffs following, the Author pursueth on his matter, beginning and ending every line with the self same syllable he used in the first: wherein he imitateth some Italian poets, who more to try their wits, than for any other conceit, have written after the like manner." If this is a stone aimed at "some Italian poets," it is cast by one who lived in the flimsiest of glass houses.

Watson must nevertheless have realized that in "scoffing bitterly at Venus and her son Cupid," [22] he was not cutting a very admirable figure, since the sentiments expressed in the first part of his book made it impossible for him to come off with honors in an attack upon love. In the introduction to Sonnet XCVIII, he admits that "the author in this passion, telling what Love is, easeth his heart, as it were, by railing out right, where he can work no other manner of revenge." The same is true of a great many other poems against love, though their authors may not acknowledge it so frankly.

It is not even desirable to quote at length from Watson's sonnets. One or two excerpts, will give an idea of his sober tone, his metrical correctness, his use of alliteration, and his general heaviness. This is from Sonnet LXXXV:

> The soldier worn with wars delights in peace;
> The pilgrim in his ease, when toils are past;
> The ship to gain the port, when storms do cease;
> And I rejoice, from Love discharg'd at last.

[22] Preface to Sonnet XCVI.

Note that in Sonnet XCV he makes the conventional appeal to reason:

> Though somewhat late, at last I found the way
> To leave the doubtful Labyrinth of Love,
> Wherein (alas) each minute seem'd a day:
> Himself was Minotaur; whose force to prove
> I was enforc'd, till Reason taught my mind
> To slay the beast, and leave him there behind.

Next to Watson, the most determined Elizabethan rebel was probably George Turberville, whose poems, however, frequently fail to satisfy the expectations they arouse by their ponderous titles. It is interesting to see him, like Wyatt, invoking the aid of Seneca and Plato; thus in "The Penitent Lover Utterly Renouncing Love, Craves Pardon of Forepassed Follies," he tells us:

> To Plato now I fly
> And Senec's sound advice:
> A Fatch for Love, I force not now
> What chance fall on the dice.

Elsewhere, stimulated by a recent repulse from his mistress, he goes into the matter at some length, and only after having reviewed the whole affair does he announce:

> I have been taught in Plato's school
> From Cupid's banner to revolt.[23]

Turberville is like all the rest who rallied round Plato's banner in defiance of love; nearly all of them had first met with reverses in their pursuit of a certain lady.

[23] "The Lover Abused Renounceth Love."

A much higher Platonism is represented by the well-known final sonnet of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella,* in which the poet takes his leave of earthly love, not because he has been unsuccessful, but because he aspires to the ultimate Platonic ideal—an ideal which very few even attempted to reach. "Eternal love, maintain thy life in me!" he cries, and obviously refers to an emotion not aroused by the contemplation of any woman's beauty. Coming, as it does, after a long series of poems in which the author has professed everlasting devotion to his mistress and has conformed in every way to the standards of courtly love, this renunciation challenges comparison with that of Gower. A wide gap separates the two, however, for Gower bases his decision chiefly upon the inconveniences connected with the lover's state, while the more idealistic Sidney rather withdraws from "this small course which birth draws out to death," in order that he may submit himself

> To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
> Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
> That doth both shine and give us light to see.

Several of the other sonneteers found occasion to abjure love; in fact, two of them, in the very midst of their respective sonnet-cycles, adopt attitudes of independence contrasting strangely with the conventional love-poems that precede and follow them in the sequence, as well as with the apparent purpose of the whole group of sonnets. Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, interrupts his praises of Cælica to dismiss Cupid from his thoughts:

Farewell, sweet boy, complain not of my truth.

. . . . . .

Cupid, now farewell, I will go play me,
With thoughts that please me less, and less betray me.[24]

Michael Drayton, in his sonnet-sequence which at different stages was known as *Idea* or as *The Shepherd's Garland*, expresses an active dislike for love:

Now fie upon thee, wayward love,
Woe to Venus, which did nurse thee.[25]

Then he reiterates the notion, more forcibly:

Cupid, I hate thee, which I'd have thee know;
A naked starveling ever mayst thou be! [26]

This, at any rate, is in full accord with his own comment on his love-poems, for he warns the reader not to look for deep passion there:

No far-fetched sigh shall ever wound my breast.
Love from mine eye a tear shall never wring,
Nor in "ah-me's" my whining sonnets drest;
(A libertine) fantasticly I sing:
My verse is the true image of my mind,
Ever in motion, still desiring change.[27]

Alcilia, a series of so-called sonnets most of which "were written by the Author after he began to decline from his passionate affection," naturally contains several renuncia-

[24] *Cælica*, LXXXV. This sonnet was closely imitated by Coleridge, in his "Farewell to Love."
[25] Song from Eclogue vii of *The Shepherd's Garland* (1606).
[26] *Idea* (1619), XLVIII.
[27] Dedicatory sonnet to Poems, 1613.

tions of love. The author wavers at first, but soon he exclaims:

> Ah well I find that Love is nought
> But folly, and an idle thought.
> The difference is twixt love and me,
> That he is blind, and I can see.[28]

Later he becomes bitter and vituperative:

> Adieu, fond Love, the mother of all error,
> Replete with hope, and fear, with joy, and pain,
> False fire of fancy, full of care and terror,
> Shadow of pleasures fleeting short, and vain.
> Die, loathed Love, receive thy latest doom;
> Night be thy grave, Oblivion thy Tomb.[29]

Lest any doubt should remain as to his opinion of love, he sums it up in a neat comparison:

> Twixt Lunacy and Love these odds appear,
> Th' one makes fools monthly, th' other all the year.[30]

A late sonneteer, William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, recalls Gower and Sidney by declaring his intention to shake off the chains of love after he has written one hundred and five sonnets, mostly submissive in tone, to his Aurora. It is hard to tell whether he aspires to higher things or whether he regards merely his own comfort when he says:

> Awake, my Muse, and leave to dream of loves,
> Shake off soft fancy's chains, I must be free.[31]

[28] *Alcilia*, "Love Deciphered."
[29] *Alcilia*, XVII.
[30] *Ibid.*, XXVII.
[31] *Aurora*, CVI.

Other Elizabethan poets added their voices to the outcry against love. The passion had a resolute and not too despondent enemy in Nicholas Breton, who went so far as to term it

> A new nothing nifle,
> Made for fools to play withal.[32]

At one time he sings gaily:

> Farewell love, and loving folly,
> All thy thoughts are too unholy.[33]

Again he bids adieu as one who has been warned by experience:

> Farewell then (unkindly) fancy,
> In thy courses all too cruel:
> Woe, the price of such a jewel,
> As turns reason to a franzy.[34]

Finally, he embodies his dislike for love in a sort of litany:

> No; love is an idle jest,
> That hath only made a word,
> Like unto a cuckoo's nest,
> That never hatched a bird.
>
> Then from nothing to conceive
> That may any substance be,
> Yet so many doth deceive;
> Lord of Heaven, deliver me.[35]

[32] "A Quarrel with Love."
[33] "A Farewell to Love."
[34] "A Solemn Conceit."
[35] "A Solemn Toy." Compare Sidney's "Love Is Dead."

The lightness of mood and style observable in these verses points toward a new era, in which the depressingly solemn complaints of the early campaigners like Wyatt and Lord Vaux will have disappeared almost entirely.

John Donne, for instance, deliberates calmly upon his past extravagances in the pursuit of love, and decides to mend his ways:

> I'll no more dote and run
> To pursue things, which had endamaged me.
> And when I come where moving beauties be,
> As men do, when the summer sun grows great,
> Though I admire their greatness, shun their heat.[36]

At the end of the Elizabethan period, as one may clearly see, there is a definite trend toward a more carelessly egotistical attitude in these poems against love. The writer no longer feels that he must turn to Seneca and Plato in order to evade all the fond effects of love, nor does he necessarily scoff bitterly at Venus and her son Cupid. He merely protests against the bother, the extravagance, or the deceptions of love, or forsakes it in compliance with a mere whim; he looks upon it rather patronizingly, in other words, as a thing to be tolerated or thrown off at will.

Shirley, it is true, indulges in a violent diatribe against women, and concludes:

> Farewell, fond love, for ever! but to be
> Safe in my soul, I could want charity.[37]

But for the most part, the poets of the new generation shed no tears when they banished love. Even Shirley, in an-

[36] "Farewell to Love."
[37] "To a Beautiful Lady."

other poem, speaks to Cupid as a grown man to a child:

> Why how now, Cupid, grown so wild?
> So great a tyrant, and a child?
> . . . . . .
> I'll give thee eyes, before we part,
> To see thy shame, and break thy heart.[38]

And William Browne of Tavistock sings in like vein:

> Love who will, for I'll love none;
> There's fools enough beside me.

Many reflections of this careless attitude are to be found in Herrick's *Hesperides,* that delightful treasure-house in which love-lyrics and rebellious ones are mixed pell-mell. Herrick, as one of his critics remarks, has "scarcely a trace of the introspectiveness and love-casuistry of the Elizabethan sonneteers." [39] Consequently he never leaves one in doubt as to what he means by one of his verses, and he usually says his say in the fewest possible words. Witness the tersenesss of this, "Upon Love":

> I do not love, nor can it be
> Love will in vain spend shafts on me:
> I did this god-head once defy:
> Since which I freeze, but cannot fry.

Here is a more complete statement:

> I could never love indeed;
> Never see mine own heart bleed:
> Never crucify my life;
> Or for widow, maid, or wife.
> . . . . . .

[38] "Cupid Ungodded."
[39] F. W. Moorman, *Robert Herrick,* London, 1910, p. 241.

But have hitherto lived free,
As the air that circles me:
And kept credit with my heart,
Neither broke i' th' whole, or part.[40]

Or the same thing in two lines:

Love he that will; it best likes me,
To have my neck from love's yoke free.[41]

In a poem addressed "To All Young Men that Love," he shows that he bears Cupid no ill will—he has chosen to remain free merely for the sake of his personal comfort:

But if flames best like ye, then
Much good do't ye gentlemen.
I a merry heart will keep,
While you wring your hands and weep.

Occasionally, however, he seems to regard with some apprehension the possibility of falling in love—

Rather than love, let me be ever lost;
Or let me 'gender with eternal frost.[42]

Just as other poets have drowned their love in wine, Herrick turned to flowers as a sure refuge if he should be in danger. Pansies, for some reason, seem to have been considered by him more efficacious than other blossoms as cures for love:

Ah, cruel Love! must I endure
Thy many scorns, and find no cure?

[40] "Upon Himself."
[41] "Another."
[42] "Against Love."

Say, are thy medicines made to be
Helps to all others, but to me?
I'll leave thee, and to Pansies come;
Comforts you'll afford me some:
You can ease my heart, and do
What love co'd ne'er be brought unto.[43]

Only once does he hint that his abstinence may be, for all his nonchalant pose, a case of sour grapes; witness "No Luck in Love":

I do love I know not what;
Sometimes this and sometimes that;
All conditions I aim at.

But, as luckless, I have yet
Many shrewd disasters met,
To gain her whom I wo'd get.

Therefore now I'll love no more,
As I've doted heretofore:
He who must be, shall be poor.

There is no need to quote more of Herrick here; in his farewells to love, as in his treatment of other themes, he is guilty of much needless repetition.

Suckling, gay and irresponsible, is not a man whom we should expect to find writing prayers, but since he did compose one, this is just the kind we should look to have from him:

This one request I make of him that sits the clouds above,
That I were freely out of debt as I am out of love.

. . . . . .

[43] "To Pansies."

'Tis only being in love and debt that breaks us of our rest;
And he that is quite out of both, of all the world is blest.[44]

He changes his note, however, in "A Farewell to Love," the somber gloom of which, for him is altogether remarkable:

Well—shadowed landscape, fare ye well:
. . . . . .
A quick corse, methinks, I spy
In every woman; and mine eye,
At passing by,
Checks, and is troubled, just
As if it rose from dust.
They mortify, not heighten me:
These of my sins the glasses be:
And here I see,
How I have lov'd before,
And so I love no more.

At first glance, I believe, anyone might be pardoned for doubting the sincerity of this poem; we can easily imagine that Suckling's eye "checks and is troubled" when a woman passes by, but not because she is "a quick corse," or "as if it rose from dust." In fairness one must observe, however, that Suckling may have experienced at least a temporary revulsion of feeling such as he describes; those who refuse to take poetry as evidence will perhaps accept a letter in which Suckling states in plain prose that he cannot bear the sight of women—"for, to say truth, it is diet I cannot yet relish otherwise than men do that on which they surfeited last." [45]

[44] "Love and Debt Alike Troublesome."
[45] Suckling, *Poems, Plays, and Other Remains,* ed. W. C. Hazlitt, (2nd. ed. rev.) London, 1892, II, 183.

The other Cavalier poets—Carew, Lovelace, and the rest—made no declarations of complete independence from the tender passion, although, as we shall see later, they were guilty of other offenses against the code. The poets of the Puritan régime, which followed, concerned themselves mainly with religious and political rebellions—at least, in the works published during that period. One man of the time, notwithstanding, managed to establish a direct relation between current events and his own resolve to overthrow the power of love. Alexander Brome can hardly be referring to anything but the Puritan revolution itself in the last two lines of "Love's Anarchy":

> Love, I must tell thee, I'll no longer be
> A victim to thy beardless deity:
> Nor shall this heart of mine,
> Now 'tis return'd,
> Be offer'd at thy shrine,
> Or at thine altar burn'd.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Reason henceforth, not love shall be my guide,
> My fellow-creatures shan't be deified;
> I'll now a rebel be,
> And so pull down
> That distaff-monarchy,
> And females' fancy'd crown.
> In these unbridled times who would not strive
> To free his neck from all prerogative?

Abraham Cowley, to be sure, took advantage of these unbridled times, but not so much to free himself from prerogative as to rid himself of trouble and annoyance. Considering that he boasted a consummate familiarity with love—

The God of Love, if such a thing there be,
May learn to love from me— [46]

we might expect him to know how to get himself out of it. Yet he calls for help, and begs for a cure at any price:

Come, doctor! use thy roughest art,
Thou canst not cruel prove;
Cut, burn, and torture, every part,
To heal me of my love.[47]

Elsewhere he addresses himself with a seriousness that suggests Puritan influence:

It is enough; enough of time and pain
Hast thou consum'd in vain;
Leave, wretched Cowley! leave
Thyself with shadows to deceive;
Think that already lost which thou must never gain.[48]

While Cowley did not publish his love-verses until 1647, he may have written many or all of them some years before.

After the Restoration, the line of farewells to love was resumed almost as though there had been no interim; the same proud, half-contemptuous attitude, the same refusal to take love seriously, are found in most of the verses written shortly after, as in those shortly before the time of the Commonwealth. The number of such poems, however, now began to decrease—perhaps because people were growing tired of them, but perhaps also because love, at this time, was too pleasant a diversion to be given up lightly.

[46] "The Prophet."
[47] "The Cure."
[48] "Love Given Over."

Many poets, as we shall see, rebelled in individual love-affairs, but only a few of them cast off love altogether.

The appeal to reason, as we have just seen in the case of Brome, was by no means obsolete. Thomas Stanley also took this philosophic attitude in a "Palinode":

> Beauty, thy harsh imperious chains
> As a scorn'd weight, I here untie,
> Since thy proud empire those disdains
> Of reason or philosophy.

Stanley even boasts of having unveiled love as an impostor, and thus having freed mankind from an "infernal power." [49]

Sedley, a writer of many frankly unchivalric love-verses as well as of some beautifully turned offers of eternal devotion, bids adieu to love as follows:

> Once more love's mighty charms are broke,
> His strength and cunning I defy;
> Once more I have thrown off his yoke,
> And am a man, and do despise the boy.[50]

That Sedley can regard the step with such equanimity is not at all surprising, for it appears to be a periodic phenomenon rather than a permanent stand. *Once more,* it will be noticed, love's mighty charms are broke, and *once more* his yoke is thrown off. It would be a wonder indeed if Sedley had not achieved a certain urbanity after so much practice.

The return to seriousness, which characterized the end

[49] "Love Deposed."
[50] "A Farewell to Love."

of the seventeenth century, may be seen in John Norris, who sings of "Seraphic Love":

> 'Tis true, frail Beauty, I did once resign
> To thy imperious charms this heart of mine.
> . . . . . .
> But now, thou soft enchantress of the mind,
> Farewell! a change, a mighty change I find;
> The empire of my heart thou must resign.

Having apparently succeeded in reconquering the empire of his heart from the charms of frail beauty, he writes from his pleasant retirement, wherever it may be:

> Well, I have thought on't, and I find
> This busy world is nonsense all;
> . . . . . .
> I sweetly think my hours away,
> Neither with business vex'd nor love.[51]

One of the surest indications of the decline into which the farewells to love were falling is the fact that they were being turned out in great numbers by the rank and file of versifiers, while the better poets were leaving them more and more alone. The song-books and collections of the late seventeenth century (which in poetic merit are as far below their Elizabethan and Jacobean prototypes as Thomas Watson is below Spenser) contain many lyrics in which love is cast off, usually without a pang, and with an egotism as amusing as it is sometimes naïve. The frankness with which the writers of these songs often reveal their early discomfitures shows that they regarded them as mere childish escapades. After a youth that was "free from horror

[51] "The Retirement."

and terror," a singer in Hicks' *London Drollery* became enamored of one Phillis, who supplied these missing ingredients so liberally that her admirer gave up the chase:

> At length I resolv'd that I never would be
> So mad as to love, but would ever go free.[52]

Someone in *Covent Garden Drollery*—perhaps Richard Brome, the compiler—submits himself to Reason again after a brief sojourn in love's dominions, and expresses surprise that one of his capacity should have suffered a lapse at all:

> Strange that I should so foolish prove,
> And thus to be misled by love.[53]

Tom Durfey's *Pills to Purge Melancholy* [54] is a veritable storehouse of amorous revolt, with hardly a groan between the covers of its six volumes. In fact, a number of its contributors wage a vigorous campaign against all serious love-making, which they regard as unqualified hypocrisy. One of them sings:

> Tell me no more of Flames in Love,
> That common dull pretence,
> Fools in Romances use to move
> Soft hearts of little sense:
> No, Strephon, I'm not such a Slave,
> Love's banish'd Power to own.

[52] "My Youth It Was Free."

[53] "When Reason O'er My Heart Did Sway."

[54] The full title is *Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy*. A large number of its songs are by Durfey, but there are also a great many by other people, some signed and others not. As the songs themselves are unimportant, the question of authorship is even more so, and I have arbitrarily called all of the unsigned songs anonymous.

Another protests even more strenuously against flames and the like, boasting his own complete independence from love's "banish'd power":

> Plague us not with idle stories,
> Whining Loves, whining Loves, whining Loves,
> And senseless Glories.
> What are Lovers, what are Kings?
> What, at best, but slavish Things?
> . . . . . .
> Free I liv'd as Nature made me,
> Love nor Beauty durst invade me.

The general level of poetry and refinement in Durfey's book is not high enough to warrant extensive quotation. The extreme coarseness of many of the songs is reflected only mildly in the case of a lad who, like the one whose youth was free from horror and terror, recalls:

> Forc'd by a cruel lawless Fate,
> I lov'd a Nymph with Passion.

Having discovered her intolerable vanity and coquetry, however, he acts as a revolting lover perhaps should, but as a gentleman certainly should not: he administers a kick to the nymph, then bids adieu "to every Female folly."

One of the songs in *Pills to Purge Melancholy* is a satirical ditty, supposed to be sung by "A Fop newly come from France," in which that fop, having reproached his mistress in affected fashion, ends with

> No, no, adieu to the cheats of *Amours*.[55]

[55] "Ah! Phillis, Why Are You Less Tender?"

This is really a burlesque of the usual farewell to love, and as such furnishes additional evidence that the vogue of such poems was by now fallen into decay—just as Sir John Davies' *Gulling Sonnets* had attested the decadence of the excessively plaintive love-sonnet. After the end of the seventeenth century, indeed, there was a sharp numerical falling-off in poems of this type, and the few that did occur showed a reversion to the seriousness already seen in Cowley and Norris. Matthew Prior, to be sure, shows traces of Cavalier and Restoration gaiety, or at least of a mock seriousness, when he exclaims:

> Heaven guard us all from Cupid's bow! [56]

or when he offers up this prayer in some verses written, curiously enough, "in the Beginning of Robe's Geography":

> And, Goddess, this kind office done,
> Charge Venus to command her son,
> (Wherever else she lets him rove)
> To shun my house, my field, my grove:
> Peace cannot dwell with hate or love.[57]

But rebellion is no joking matter to George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, who reasons himself free in "Adieu l'Amour":

> Here end my chains, and thraldom cease,
> If not in joy, I'll live at least in peace;
> Since for the pleasures of an hour,
> We must endure an age of pain,
> I'll be this abject thing no more,
> Love, give me back my heart again.

[56] A parenthetical exclamation in "The Despairing Shepherd."
[57] "Of All that William Rules."

Neither does Samuel Derrick treat it lightly. Instead of dashing off a few insolent lines "To Celia," or "To Myra," he composes "The Resolution, an Ode":

> Love shall no more my soul molest;
> Nor triumph in my peaceful breast;
> I'll sigh no more for Celia's charms;
> Nor bliss expect from Myra's arms.
> 'Tis brighter glory fires my bosom now,
> Bright glory claims my ev'ry ardent vow.

So greatly have the times changed that William Hamilton, after having achieved his independence, almost regrets the step. At any rate, he derives singularly little pleasure from his new freedom:

> 'Tis past! the pangs of love are past,
> I love, I love no more;
> Yet who would think I am at last
> More wretched than before? [58]

Mark Akenside revives the old-age theme, and dismisses love with gestures reminiscent of Wyatt and Lord Vaux:

> Away! Away!
> Tempt me no more, insidious love:
> Thy soothing sway
> Long did my youthful bosom prove:
> At length thy treason is discern'd,
> At length some dear-bought caution earn'd:
> Away! nor hope my riper age to move.[59]

But if this be considered solemn, how much more so is "Love, an Elegy." Here, as above, Akenside begins with the

[58] "Love Turned to Despair."
[59] Ode XIV, "The Complaint."

confession that his heart has known too much of beauty's power, but he hails the dawn of a new era: "at last the visionary scenes decay," while his "eyes, exulting, bless the newborn day." He proceeds to point out "what plagues attend the lover's state," and, as a natural result of this review, declares:

> I bid adieu, then, to these woeful scenes;
> I bid adieu to all the sex of queens;
> Adieu to every simple suffering soul
> That lets a woman's will his ease control.
> There laugh, ye witty! and rebuke, ye grave!
> For me, I scorn to boast that I'm a slave;
> I bid the whining brotherhood be gone,
> Joy to my heart! my wishes are my own.
> Farewell the female heaven, the female hell,
> To the great god of Love a glad farewell.

Lest the witty should laugh and the grave rebuke unduly, however, he hastens to add that a renunciation of love will not deprive him of his sole occupation:

> I feel diviner fires my breast inflame,
> To active science, and ingenuous fame:
> Resume the paths my earliest choice began,
> And lose, with pride, the lover in the man.

It is worth noting that, if we may trust Akenside's testimony, the witty and the grave were now on the side of the faithful lovers, and a man who broke away from the conventional ties had to justify himself by turning to "active science and ingenuous fame." The rebellious lover, in other words, was now on the defensive; he was guilty until he proved himself innocent, and nothing would have been so apt to prejudice his judges against him as flippancy.

This condition lasted for a considerable time, and its effects may be seen with painful clearness in a few cases. A contemporary of Shelley and Keats, for example, named John Dawes Worgan—whose death came very early even for an epoch when poets were dying young—announced his independence in "Ambition Triumphant over Love":

> No more, ye Deities of soft desire,
> With votive incense at your shrine I bow;
> In other breasts illume your treacherous fire;
> For wisdom's manlier bliss I breathe my vow, etc.

This, of course, was heresy, and could only be excused on the ground of deep feeling. In self-defense, therefore, the author wrote as follows: "The melancholy tone that pervades the majority of the sonnets may perhaps be regarded as affectation in the writings of one, who has scarcely emerged from puerility, and it may be suspected that I have caught the fashionable rage for doleful ditties. Not a sentiment however have I uttered, which did not proceed from the bottom of my heart." [60]

From the more important Romantic poets only a small group of not very original renunciations may be gathered. Coleridge's imitation of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, and Scott's imitation of "The Faithful Lover's Farewell" have been mentioned above. Campbell bids farewell to the passion in rocking-horse couplets that are literally, but not figuratively, breath-taking:

> I had a heart that doted once in passion's boundless pain,
> And though the tyrant I abjured, I could not break his chain;
> But now that Fancy's fire is quench'd, and ne'er can burn anew,
> I've bid to Love, for all my life, adieu! adieu! adieu! [61]

[60] Worgan, *Select Poems,* Philadelphia, 1813, p. 44.
[61] "Farewell to Love."

The artificial alliteration of this verse recalls the early Elizabethans, but the failure to explain how the unbreakable chain of line two becomes a fire in line three and how that fire is quenched, must be either an exercise of poetic license or a concession to the taste of the period.

James Hogg, too, manages to impart a lilting swing to his reflections even though he takes his amorous misadventures much to heart:

> I'll nae mair strive, while I'm alive,
> For aught but missing slavery, O;
> . . . . . .
> If fickle fame but save my name,
> An' frae oblivion screen me, O;
> Then farewell fortune, farewell love,
> An' farewell, bonnie Jeanie, O! [62]

Landor, like Akenside, declares himself too old for love; in fact, speaking "while Time allows the short reprieve," he implies that very little remains for him but to settle his accounts with this world and wait to be taken into the next:

> Just look at me! would you believe
> 'Twas once a lover?
> . . . . . .
> Thro' gallopade I cannot swing
> The entangling blooms of Beauty's spring:
> I cannot say the tender thing,
> Be't true or false,
>
> And am beginning to opine
> Those girls are only half divine

[62] "I Hae Lost My Jeanie, O."

Whose waists yon wicked boys entwine
In giddy waltz.[63]

With Tom Moore we return for a moment to the disdainful attitude of the seventeenth-century poets, though by no means to their levity. In an ode "To Nea," he recalls vividly the pangs of love, and concludes:

Not even for thee, thou lovely one,
Would I endure such pains again.

Elsewhere he works up righteous anger by a description of feminine faults, and finally declares:

Oh! blot me from the race of men
. . . . . .
If e'er I love such things again.[64]

Although Thomas Wade, to use his own words, had lavished all "the rich strains of powerful poesy" on his mistress, he found them not powerful enough to win her constant affection, and hence he concludes that "Love is an idle thing." [65] Its loss may cause momentary discomfort, but it also brings definite compensations:

On the great day when I did cease to love,
A glory from the midst of things departed:
But straightway I became more solemn-hearted;
Lifting the business of my mind above
The vulgar work of sense, and even drew
A fulness from the world's new vacancy.[66]

63 "Yes; I Write Verses Now and Then."
64 "Woman."
65 "The Misgiving."
66 "The Undeceiving."

Praed, at the ripe age of twenty-four, declares himself superannuated for the pursuance of love-affairs; perhaps he is merely satirizing poems like those of Landor and Akenside, for his "Palinodia" obviously is not altogether serious:

> There was a time when I could feel
> All passion's hopes and fears,
> And tell what tongues can ne'er reveal,
> By smiles, and sighs, and tears.
> The days are gone! no more! no more,
> The cruel fates allow;
> And though I'm hardly twenty-four,
> I'm not a lover now!

If he intended to laugh this attitude out of existence, however, he failed, for we have Wilfrid Blunt remarking, a few decades later:

> See, how time has struck me on the hip.
> I cannot hate or love.[67]

"My love is dead," says the same poet elsewhere, "dead and in spite of me." [68] The only logical explanation is that he has outgrown it.

John Clare catches the spirit, the tone, and even the language of the early metaphysical poets in his "Farewell and Defiance to Love":

> Love and thy vain employs, away
> From this too oft deluded breast!
> No longer will I court thy stay,
> To be my bosom's teazing guest.

[67] *The Love-Sonnets of Proteus,* LXXII.
[68] *Ibid.,* XVI.

Thou treacherous medicine, reckoned pure,
Thou quackery of the harassed heart,
That kills what it pretends to cure,
Life's mountebank thou art.

The last few examples cited still retain the solemnity which Victorian convention demanded of such unorthodox pronouncements, but they are noticeably lacking in the dolorous, even semi-apologetic attempts at self-justification which the sentimentalist and Romanticists had considered necessary. Thus even though their numbers were still very thin, the rebellious lovers must have been moving toward a stronger position again, and it is not surprising that the end of the nineteenth century should have found the better poets taking up the theme and treating it, if not lightly, at least boldly.

In the nineties, the renunciations of love are as frankly egotistical as those of Elizabethan times, and strongly reflect that feeling of satiety which is so characteristic of the poetry known as Decadent. Arthur Symons, for example, after celebrating an incredible number of affairs in heavily perfumed verses, decides:

I have had enough of women, and enough of love.[69]

Or in different words:

I am weary of living, and I long to rest
From the sorrowful and immense fatigue of love.[70]

Similarly Ernest Dowson, who, like Nicholas Breton, prays for release:

[69] "Wanderer's Song."
[70] "Moonrise."

Goddess the laughter-loving, Aphrodite, befriend!
Long have I served thine altars, serve me now at the end,
Let me have peace of thee, truce of thee, golden one, send.[71]

The same mood is found in Richard Le Gallienne, who, as if to show that it is nothing new, calls it "An Echo from Horace." Specifically, it echoes the theme, *Lusisti est, et edisti, atque bibisti; tempus abire, tibi est:*

Take away the dancing girls, quench the lights, remove
Golden cups and garlands sere, all the feast;
. . . . . .
Thou hast had thy fill and more than enough of love.[72]

The twentieth century presents a conglomeration, reminiscent of both Elizabethan and Cavalier themes, but generally uncompromising and unregretful in condemning and dismissing love. On the somber side we have W. H. Davies, who broods, like the early Elizabethans, on the fickleness of women, then growls savagely:

Now with that false deceitful sex,
Henceforth I have for ever done.[73]

For sheer grimness, however, the prize must go to Thomas Hardy, who expresses a willingness to sacrifice not only himself, but the whole human race, if by that means love may be destroyed:

I said to Love,
"It is not now as in the old days
When men adored thee and thy ways
All else above.
. . . . . .

[71] "Libera Me."
[72] From *A Jongleur Strayed*, N. Y., 1922. By Permission of Doubleday, Doran & Co.
[73] "The Lost Sex."

We know more of thee now than then;
We were but weak in judgment when,
With hearts abrim,
We clamored thee that thou would'st please
Inflict on us thine agonies,"
I said to him.

. . . . . .

"Man's race shall perish, threatenest thou?

. . . . . .

Mankind shall cease—so let it be,"
I said to Love.[74]

Although Hardy may really have felt that the old submission to love was a weakness of judgment, he cannot be held responsible for all of the hatred shown in this poem, for he said that most of the volume in which it appeared was "dramatic or impersonative." [75] Not quite so radically, but still firmly, he abjures love in another verse:

At last I put off love,
For twice ten years
The daysman of my thought,
And hope, and doing;
Being ashamed thereof,
And faint of fears
And desolations wrought
In his pursuing.[76]

While Hardy speaks "as one who plumbs Life's dim profound," there are several modern poets who treat the matter more superficially and more light-heartedly, yet arrive at practically the same conclusion. Thus Alfred Williams asks, stoically:

[74] By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.
[75] Preface to *Poems of the Past and Present*, 1901.
[76] "He Abjures Love." By permission of the Macmillan Company.

What boots a tragical complaint
Of wasted sacrifice in love? [77]

And he answers himself:

Rather will I some muse provoke
As shall give Love a killing wound,
And slay him with an easy stroke,
And drown this heavy-heartedness
In merry sport and idleness.

Edward Davison harks back to the school of poets who profess to have outgrown love as one would outgrow childhood diseases:

Now with that long sickness past
  I scarce remember or believe
I ever thought that it could last,
  And grieve because I cannot grieve.[78]

Laurence Binyon gives us the imperiousness of the Cavaliers, tinged slightly with forbearance:

Go now, Love,
Since staying's joy no longer!
Leave me to prove
If Time can make me stronger!
Nay, look not over thy shoulder so,
Pleading so sweetly to remain,
Where thou workest so much pain:
Look not behind thee, haste and go!

Finally Oliver Gogarty makes a complete return to the light-hearted banter of the Cavaliers in "A Pithy Prayer

[77] "What Boots Complaint?"
[78] "Once—" from *Harvest of Youth*, 1927. By permission of Harper and Brothers.

against Love." The Irish poet calls on Falstaff and Hippocleides in rollicking verses, praying somewhat irreverently to strange deities:

> Gods, get me out of it!
> Spirits of Laughter
> Come to my aid now
> And exorcise it!

Spiritually, it is a twin brother to Suckling's

> This one request I make to him that sits the clouds above,
> That I were freely out of debt as I am out of love.

One of the most appealing traits of the rebellious lover as a species is his generous eagerness to give others advice. To advise someone else to cast off the chains of love, even though one has not been able to do as much for oneself, is of course a breach of the romantic code, which demands of its adherent not only a lifelong devotion but a certain amount of proselytism. That is to say, one should go about praising the beneficent effects of love in order to enlist one's friends among its servitors. It is particularly touching, then, to find a lover who has been unable to free himself from bondage, who perhaps has pined away in the most approved fashion because of his unconquerable and hopeless love, but who nobly sacrifices his chances for salvation in the paradise of courtly lovers by warning others to avoid love and thus escape a fate like his.

Examples of such advice are to be found in English poetry, along with the more consistent, but less poignant counsel of those who profess, at least, to have practised

what they preach. Since all of this advice is rebellion in the second degree, it is appropriate to give a brief account of it, though it naturally reflects the same general tendencies that were observable in the out-and-out renunciations of love.

In the first place, there are sundry "Remedies of Love," some of them adapted from Ovid, and others more or less original. The Elizabethans and two or three generations succeeding them were deeply interested in this problem of the antidotes for love. The author of *A Flourish upon Fancy*, presumably Nicholas Breton, gives an allegorical description of "The Fort of Fancy," and suggests ways to overcome the fort. Francis Beaumont made a verse translation of Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*. Herrick sets up as a prescriber of cures and announces:

> He that will not love, must be
> My scholar, and learn this of me.[79]

But it is to be feared that his lecture, which is merely an enumeration of the cares that attend the lover's state, will not prove very helpful. He gives more specific advice in "Dissuasions from Idleness," where he lays down this rule:

> Live employ'd, and so live free
> From these fetters; like to me
> Who have found, and still can prove,
> *The lazy man the most doth love.*

There is a rather ineffectual "Remedy of Love" to be found in Tate's *Poems by Several Hands, and on Several Occasions* (1685), where it is ascribed to "Mr. Evelyn"—supposedly the diarist. Philip Ayres offers some naïve ad-

[79] "Not to Love."

vice against "subtle arts" in "The Innocent Magician; or, a Charm against Love," in which he boasts:

> A great, but harmless conjurer am I,
> That can Love's captives set at liberty.

The later suggestions for love's cure mostly recommend wine as a sovereign remedy; they are convivial songs, good enough perhaps when sung in appropriate surroundings, but monotonously alike, and generally poor verse. Two lines from *Pills to Purge Melancholy* give the tone of the whole group:

> Let us drink, and then 'twill prove,
> Drinking's better sport than Love.[80]

In the majority of cases, however, the advice consists merely of a warning to avoid love—a warning frequently emphasized, as I have said, by a reference to the deplorable condition in which love has left the speaker himself. Thus Alexander Scott counsels:

> Flee always from the snare,
> Learn at me to beware.[81]

Barnaby Googe cites his own experiences in writing "of the blessed State of him that feels not the force of Cupid's flames":

> So oft say I,
> That blessed is the wight,
> Yea, Nevell, blest,
> And double blest again,

[80] "Bacchus against Cupid."
[81] "A Rondel of Love."

That can by rea-
Son rule his mind aright,
And take such foo-
Lish fading toys for vain.[82]

Humphrey Gifford, after discoursing on "the strange and awkward fits" of Cupid's thralls, concludes:

Thrice happy is their chance,
That never knew to tread the lover's dance.[83]

Thomas Watson likewise describes the pains of love in order to frighten away the uninitiated:

All this I write, that others may beware,
Though now myself twice free from all such care.[84]

And Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, does his best to save his fellow-men from amorous pains by disparaging love:

Who worships Cupid doth adore a boy.[85]

Robert Southwell tries to shame lovers into a rebellion by describing "Love's Servile Lot," and bids them:

Plow not the seas, sow not the sands,
Leave off your idle pain;
Seek other mistress for your minds,
Love's service is in vain.

William Drummond of Hawthornden furnishes an extreme example of the lover who, unable to break his own

[82] "To Alexander Nevell, of the Blessed State," etc.
[83] "Of the Uncontented State of Lovers."
[84] *Hekatompathia*, LXXXIX.
[85] *Cælica*. LXII.

bonds, desires that others may profit from a knowledge of his sad case. He writes what purports to be his epitaph:

> Dear eye, which deign'st on this sad monument
> The sable scroll of my mishaps to view,
> . . . . . .
> O let not Love thee to his laws subdue.
> Look on the woeful shipwrack of my youth,
> And let my ruins for a Phare thee serve,
> To shun the rock Capharean of untruth,
> And serve no god who doth his churchmen starve.

These are typical of the Elizabethan admonitions against love, of which a number also appeared in the anthologies and song-books, as well as in the broadside ballad-sheets. It is needless to quote them further. Their mournfulness decreased as time went on, for the Cavalier and Restoration gallants shook off their own chains so easily that they supposed everyone capable of doing the same with a little urging. The seventeenth-century counselors generally assumed a tone like that of Shirley, who wrote:

> Now fie on foolish love! it not befits
> Or man or woman know it.

Thomas Stanley said he had deposed love single-handed, and urged a general uprising:

> You that unto your mistress' eyes
> Your hearts do sacrifice,
> And offer sighs or tears at Love's rich shrine,
> Renounce with me
> Th' idolatry,
> Nor this infernal power esteem divine! [86]

[86] "Love Deposed."

Etherege, on the other hand, addressed all those who had not yet fallen in love, and advised them to remain in their blissful state:

> Ye happy swains whose hearts are free
> From Love's imperial chain,
> Take warning, and be taught by me
> T' avoid th' enchanting pain.

The return to seriousness may be seen, however, in John Hall, who bases his advice on the transitoriness of beauty:

> Is Beauty thus? then who would lie
> Love-sick and die?
> And's wretched self annihilate,
> For knows not what? [87]

And the eighteenth century, if it dared to advise against love at all, did so with appropriate solemnity and had generally some high end in view. Thus Akenside counsels a friend:

> No, foolish youth—to virtuous fame,
> If now thy early hopes be vow'd—
> . . . . . .
> Lean not to Love's enchanting snare.[88]

Except for the drinking-songs, referred to above, I have found only three or four examples of advice against love written during the last century and a half. It may be that men no longer feel so altruistically inclined, but it is more likely that the diversification of activities in modern life has rendered such advice unnecessary. John Clare, who had reason to know whereof he spoke, demanded:

[87] "Of Beauty."
[88] "Ode XI. On Love, to a Friend."

Who ever would love or be tied to a wife
When it makes a man mad all the days of his life? [89]

Alfred Williams gives solemn warning against Cupid:

Trust not his seeming innocence,
His melancholy plight forlorn.
. . . . . .
But close your heart with double bars
And double-guard the outer door,
His payment is with livid scars,
And deep soul-anguish evermore.[90]

And James Stephens advises against love merely because it leads to jealousy:

To be not jealous, give not love! [91]

Perhaps it is as well, after all, that this particular type of rebellious love-poetry has lost its popularity. Its only charm is to be found in the naïveté of verses like Drummond's; the priggishness of Akenside can well be spared. To give such advice, except *in articulo mortis*, requires a presumption that to one reader, at least, is somewhat distasteful.

[89] "I Peeled Bits of Straw."
[90] "Love, the Wanderer."
[91] "Green Weeds."

CHAPTER THREE

Personal Revolts

NUMERICALLY, of course, the poems in which a lover rebels against and overthrows the power of his mistress constitute by far the most important of our classifications. These poems, while the most interesting individually, are also the most difficult to study as a type: their interrelations, debts, and modes are sometimes obscured by the great number and variety of examples, as well as by the fact that more of them than of the farewells to love are truly personal expressions, (apparently) sincere indications of the poet's feeling under certain circumstances, rather than obeisances to a literary fashion. The underlying uniformity which connects so many of them is probably due as much to the similarity of the circumstances as to the influence of poetical tradition.

That such tradition was at work, however, is sure; its effect may be seen both quantitatively and qualitatively. These personal rebellions, like the farewells to love, reached their greatest popularity in the seventeenth century; they became comparatively scarce in the eighteenth, and scarcer in the nineteenth, but have sprung up again in great plenty during the last few decades. In stylistic devices and in reasons for rebellion, furthermore, some definite tendencies can be traced though the maze. The gradual shift in dominant tone, from seriousness to nonchalance and back again, shows itself most clearly.

Only open mutiny is considered here; grumblings, threats, and temporary flare-ups followed by submission in the same poem, will be discussed elsewhere. Mere complaints do not come in at all, for even under the rules of courtly love they were tolerated—nay, even encouraged, as evidence that the lover took his passion seriously. We are concerned with him only when he severs relations with his mistress completely.

As with the renunciations of love, we return to the fourteenth century, and begin with another poem ascribed to Chaucer. The "Ballade against Woman Unconstant" is definitely imitated from Machaut,[1] but again the adaptor —whether Chaucer or not—has expressed himself in plain, straightforward English:

> Madame, for your newe-fanglenesse
> Many a servaunt have ye put out of grace.
> I take my leve of your unstedfastnesse.

Here he is saying what scores of poets will say after him, for of all the various complaints which we shall find lodged against forsaken mistresses, none occurs so frequently as this of "new-fangleness," or "unsteadfastness," which was one of the few unforgivable sins. It should be noted, as a doubtful tribute to Chaucer's mistress, that her fickleness surpassed that of most, for it affected even her color:

> To newe thyng your lust is ay so kene;
> In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene.

From the fifteenth century comes only an anonymous song or two. One of them, which seems to have been pop-

[1] See R. D. French, *A Chaucer Handbook*, N. Y., 1927, p. 115.

ular, has a lilting swing and a cheery tone, as these lines show:

> Sythen that hur hert is turnyd me fro,
> I hold yt the best for drede of gyle,
> Turne up hur halster and let hur go.[2]

In the early sixteenth century William Dunbar, whom we have already seen renouncing love altogether, ostensibly in order to devote himself to higher things, makes it quite clear that this step will affect one woman in particular, of whom he says:

> Now I sett nocht by a bene
> Hir bewty, nor hir twa fair ene.[3]

While Dunbar at least writes with restraint, the same cannot be said of his contemporary, Skelton. The latter, apostrophizing "mastres Anne, that farly swete, That wonnes at the Key in Temmys strete," berates her with true Skeltonian disregard for politeness and euphemism, and, although the young lady has had no opportunity to speak, he ends by telling her:

> Holde youre tong now, all beshrewde.[4]

Alexander Scott has several poems in which he abandons a lady simply because she will not grant his suit. He values his heart too highly to allow it to suffer torment, so he bids it:

> Returne the, hairt, hamewart agane,
> And byd quhair thow was wont to be;

[2] "I Not What I Shall Syng nor Say."
[3] "Of Luve Erdly and Divine."
[4] "Womanhood, Wanton, Ye Want."

Thou art ane fule to suffer pane,
For luve of hir that luvis not the.

It was more customary for poets at this early time, however, to justify their rebellions by some fault in the lady's bearing more reprehensible than obduracy, and accordingly we find Scott taking back his heart from another mistress because "hir hairt and mynd is uncertane":

And sen my hairt is fre,
I bid not for to lane,
I sall awysit be
Or I hir luve agane.[5]

Now, a poet may rebel against his mistress once or twice without arousing any suspicion; he may rebel against two or three—or two or three times against the same one—and seem merely hard to get along with; but when he conducts the business on a large scale we immediately begin to doubt his sincerity. Anyone reading Wyatt's collected poems might well believe him to have been the most jilted lover of modern times, and the most jilting; certainly no one in the history of English poetry has published his amorous misadventures more extensively. Besides complaining frequently about his ill treatment, he makes no less than thirteen declarations of independence from one mistress or another, and each break is apparently more painful to the author than the last. That a man should find himself successively dissatisfied with a baker's dozen of mistresses—we have no way of ascertaining whether any two of the poems are addressed to the same lady—is bad enough, but that he should not in the least grow accustomed to his disappointment is truly deplorable.

[5] "Langour to Leive, Allace!"

Again the titles given by the first editor generally indicate the tone of the pieces: "The Lover Having Broken his Bondage, Voweth Never More to Be Enthralled"; "The Disdainful Lady Refusing to Hear her Lover's Suit, He Resolveth to Forsake Her"; "The Lover Taught, Mistrusteth Allurements"; "The Lover Renounceth his Cruel Love for Ever." In "The Recured Lover Renounceth his Fickle Mistress for her New-Fangleness," there is an immediate echo of Chaucer, both in title and in thought. Says Wyatt:

> Thy thought is too light and variable
> To change so oft without occasion.
> Thou hast no faith.

The poet employs no half-measures when he "Renounceth his Cruel Love for Ever," telling her:

> Though I starve, and to my death still mourn
> And piecemeal in pieces though I be torn;
> And though I die, yielding my wearied ghost,
> Shall never thing again make me return.

Surely anyone who would sooner be torn "piecemeal in pieces" than submit again to the domination of his mistress deserves an honorable place among the insurgent ranks.

Better known, and justly so, is Wyatt's "Revocation," written, it is said, on the occasion of his separation from his wife:

> What should I say?
> Since Faith is dead,
> And Truth away
> From you is fled?

Should I be led
With doubleness?
Nay! Nay! mistress.

. . . . .

Can ye say nay
But that you said
That I alway
Should be obeyed?
And—thus betrayed,
Or that I wist!
Farewell, unkist! [6]

There is no known autobiographical background for the rondeau which Tottel called "The Abused Lover Resolveth to Forget his Unkind Mistress," but according to Wyatt's latest editor it "appears to be written under strong emotion. . . . Indignation and hurt pride thrill through the poem." [7] It runs:

What no, perdie! Ye may be sure!
Think not to make me to your lure,
With words and cheer so contrarying,
Sweet and sour counter-weighing,
Too much it were still to endure.

. . . . . .

Trow ye, I dote without ending?
What no, perdie!

His nearest approach to an attitude of nonchalance is found in such poems as "He Professeth Indifference," where it is to be feared, however, that he does little more than profess it:

[6] For circumstances of writing, see *Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat,* ed. A. K. Foxwell, London, 1913, II, xiv.
[7] *Ibid.,* II, 25.

Hate whom ye list, for I care not;
Love whom ye list, and spare not, etc.

It is not too soon to call attention to the artificiality—or shall we say, the artifice?—of a great many of these poems. Chaucer's verse is a ballade; two of Wyatt's are rondeaux, and one has short lines ending in rime-royal pattern. All of these forms are highly wrought, and require so much purely mechanical care that the reader may be justified in questioning the depth of the passion behind them, no matter how bitter or how gloomy the language employed. This trait will become increasingly apparent as we multiply examples. These devices, of course, were used quite generally by the writers of this time, who must have considered that their poems gained strength by them. Witness the ponderous alliteration of this anonymous verse from *Tottel's Miscellany*, directed against an unsteadfast mistress:

O temerous tauntress that delights in toys,
Tumbling cockboat tottering to and fro,
Jangling jestress, depraveress of sweet joys,
Ground of the graff whence all my grief doth grow,
Sullen serpent environed with despite,
That ill for good at all times dost requite.[8]

The alliterative mode extended even to the titles of poems: witness "The Lamentable Lover Abiding in the Bitter Bale of Direful Doubts Towards his Lady's Loyalty, Writeth unto her as Followeth." [9]

The other anonymous contributions to *Tottel's* are very

[8] "Against an Unsteadfast Woman."
[9] *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, ed. H. E. Rollins, Cambridge [Mass.], 1926, p. 7.

much of a piece; the variety lies chiefly in the meter. One lover bitterly laments

> The smoky sighs, the bitter tears,
> That I in vain have wasted,[10]

and resolves to be more sparing of them in the future. Another forsakes his conventionally icy-hearted mistress:

> Farewell, thou frozen heart and ears of hardened steel,
> Thou lackest years to understand the grief that I did feel.[11]

The steel ears, I believe, are a comparatively original touch. We turn from the picture of this metallic and icy maiden to a lover who, "Deceived by his Love, Repenteth him of the True Love He Bare Her," and who varies his metaphors with confusing rapidity:

> I that Ulysses' years have spent,
> To find Penelope,
> Find well that folly I have meant,
> To seek that was not so.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Much like the Mouse that treads the trap,
> In hope to find her food,
> And bites the bread that stops her breath,
> So in like case I stood.
> Till now repentance hasteth him
> To further me so fast,
> That where I sank, there now I swim.

The lover who, "Not Regarded in Earnest Suit, Being Become Wiser, Refuseth her Proffered Love," must be a physician, for his verse has a decidedly medicinal flavor:

[10] "The Lover Accusing His Love for Her Unfaithfulness, Purposeth to Live in Liberty."
[11] "The Lover Forsaketh His Unkind Love."

Do 'way your physic, I faint no more;
The salve you sent it comes too late.

The most ingenious of these rather ingenuous poems is one directed "Against a Gentlewoman by whom he was Refused":

I will repent that I have done,
To end so well the loss is small;
I lost her love, that less hath won,
To vaunt she had me as her thrall.
What though a gyllot sent that note?
By cock and pye I meant it not!

Leaving behind us "the smoky sighs, the bitter tears" of *Tottel's Miscellany,* we come to the somewhat more manly, though no less serious uprisings of the next decade. A "Mistress A" incurred the displeasure of Barnaby Googe, who reminds her with savage pleasure that a time of retribution is approaching:

For God shall give me grace
To see the time wherein I shall
Neglect thy foolish face,
And till that time adieu to thee,
God keep thee far from me,
And send thee in that place to dwell,
That I shall never see.[12]

On the subject of "A Refusal," tendered perhaps by the same Mistress A, he is brief and to the point:

Farewell, I waste no vainer words,
I hope for better day.

[12] "To Mistress A."

The need for artificial embellishments, such as alliteration and internal rime, was felt by many an early Elizabethan rebel. In "An Answer as Pretty, to the Scoff of his Lady," a contributor to Clement Robinson's *Handfull of Pleasant Delights* employs the second device as follows:

> Now will I be trudging, without any grudging,
> I am content to give you ground;
> Good reason doth bind me to leave you behind me,
> For you are better lost than found.

Very similarly a lover in *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions,* who "Grievously Complaineth against the Unjust Dealing of his Lady Beloved":

> Since thou, unjust, hath caught a lust
> To plough in barren ground:
> Who long thee love, he shall thee prove,
> Much better lost than found.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A due unjust, sith that I must
> Of force declare thee so,
> The fault is thine, the pain is mine:
> And so I let thee go.

George Gascoigne was compelled to bolster up with alliteration the somewhat ineffective defiance of "The Doal of Disdain, written by a Lover disdainfully Rejected Contrary to Former Promise":

> The deadly drops of dark disdain,
> Which daily fall on my desert:
> The ling'ring suit long spent in vain,
> Whereof I feel no fruit but smart,
> Enforce me now these words to write,
> Not all for love, but more for spite.

This writer's *Weeds* contain several poems written "not all for love, but more for spite," but most of their bitterness is concentrated in the titles, which are fearsome indeed. Consider the expectations aroused by a "Farewell with a Mischief, written by a lover being disdainfully abjected by a dame of high calling, who had chosen (in his place) a play fellow of baser condition; and therefore he determined to step aside, and before his departure giveth her this farewell in verse." But the anticipated lightning fails to strike; the "farewell with a mischief" ends thus:

> And far from thee now must I take my flight,
> Where tongues may tell (and I not see) thy fall,
> Where I may drink these drugs of thy despite
> To purge my Melancholic mind withal.
> In secret so my stomach I will starve,
> Wishing thee better than thou dost deserve.

A similar discrepancy in tone between title and poem exists in "*Soon acquainted, soon forgotten,* as appeareth here by an uncourteous farewell to an inconstant Dame," which merely reminds the Dame that she lacks

> A steadfast mind, a faithful loving heart.

The sonneteers are represented here sparsely, and by the weaker members of their group. Even though a number of the sequences were merely conventionalized love-offerings to an imaginary mistress, the greater poets had too high a sense of artistic unity to disrupt the series with a sonnet that jarred hopelessly with the tone of the whole. The lesser poets may simply not have felt the inconsistency of such a reversal of ideas, or they may have believed that a temporary rebellion would show strength of character or

would add verisimilitude in what was supposed to be a faithful account of the poet's emotional life under his mistress' influence. It is not inconceivable, on the other hand, that a mediocre sonneteer with some knowledge of human nature might employ this rather sensational device purposely to attract attention and to make up for his artistic deficiencies.

The "uppishness" of the sonneteers, at any rate, was seldom lasting; the sonnet following a contumacious one usually expressed contrition for the unworthy thought, or simply ignored it and went on professing devotion as though nothing had ever interfered with the poet's affection. Sometimes he vacillated, as does Griffin in his sequence, *Fidessa,* wherein the author devotes the first two lines of a piece to wondering whether or not he shall even express himself:

> Oh no, I dare not! Oh, I may not speak!
> Yes, yes, I dare! I can! I must! I will! [13]

Having taken up this courageous position, he finds the rest easy, and ends in open revolt:

> I took her to be Beauty's queen alone;
> But now I see she is a senseless stone!

Watson, who cut such an imposing figure with his farewells to love, seldom descended to particularities, so that only two of the sonnets in his *Passionate Century* concern her who was the cause of his professed withdrawal from the amorous lists. In one he compares her to a harpy; [14] in the other he first curses

[13] *Fidessa,* LV.
[14] *Hekatompathia,* XCVII.

> The time wherein these lips of mine
> Did pray or praise the Dame that was unkind,[15]

and then, far from being satisfied, goes on to curse his will, her heart, eyes, and voice, the days, paper, and ink wasted on her, etc.

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who abjured love entirely at one point in his sonnet-sequence to Cælica, casts himself loose from the lady's power at another point in the same work:

> I'll hold no more; false Cælica, live free;
> Seem fair to all the world, and foul to me.[16]

Robert Tofte, whose *Laura* is just a paste imitation of "the sapphire Laura wore When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought," does not rebel against his present mistress, but in explaining her unusually brown complexion he rakes up some old ashes:

> I loved one most beautiful before;
> Whom now, as death, I do abhor,
> Because to scorn my service her I found.[17]

Lastly William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, quite early in his sequence *Aurora* (which, as we have seen, ends with a renunciation of love), informs his mistress that his love is on the wane and will soon vanish entirely:

> Yet all my merits could not move thy mind,
> But furnish'd trophies for t'adorn thy pride,
> That in the furnace of those troubles tried

[15] *Ibid.*, XCIV.
[16] *Cælica*, XLII.
[17] *Laura* (Part 3), XXXI.

The temper of my love, whose flame I find
Fin'd and refin'd too oft, but faintless flashes,
And must within short time fall down in ashes.[18]

So much for the sonneteers; now for the other Elizabethan apostates, some of whom reclaim their freedom merely because they have wooed the lady in vain, but most of whom complain of their mistress' faithlessness. Although amorous rebellion was in great vogue, the majority of lovers had not yet become sufficiently emboldened to kick over the traces without at least an attempt at self-justification. Never before or since, therefore, has the "new-fangleness" theme been employed on so large a scale.

First comes George Turberville, the ponderous titles of whose verses adhere to the old tradition, but who retains a degree of individuality owing to his abundant use of hawking metaphor; he might well have been the original of Walton's *Venator*. Let us hope, at any rate, that he was a better hand with a falcon than with a line of verse. In "The Lover to a Gentlewoman, that after Great Friendship without Desert or Cause of Misliking, Refused Him," he addresses his mistress as follows:

Live like a haggard still therefore,
And for no luring care:
For best (I see) contents thy mind
At wish and will to fare.

. . . . . .

This counsel take of him that once
Did keep thee at his beck:
But now gives up in open field
For fear of filthy check.

[18] *Aurora*, XXII.

Equally full of hawking and inconstancy is "To his Friend, That Refused Him Without Cause, Why, But Only upon Delight of Change":

> You show yourself to be
> A woman right by kind:
> . . . . . .
> Diseases must of force
> Such feeding foul ensue:
> No force to me, thou wert my Bird,
> But (Falcon) now adieu.

In "The Lover Abused Renounceth Love," however, he adopts a more independent position. This poem has been quoted in part already, but since the final renunciation is the result of an unsuccessful affair with an individual young lady, the case must be cited here. The lover's standpoint needs no comment:

> Since I see her stony heart
> Cannot be pierced with pity's lance,
> Since nought is gained but woeful smart,
> I do intend to break the dance,
> And quite forego, forego
> My pleasant foe
> That pains me so, and thinks in fine,
> To make me like to Circe's swine.

John Davies, whose "gulling" helped to laugh the plaintive love-sonnet out of existence, was never a slavish follower of fashion; accordingly, when he broke away from his mistress, he chose to base his desertion upon a novel reason—the difference in their complexions:

> Black Mayel, complain not that I fly,
> Since fate commands antipathy:

Prodigious must that union prove,
Where day and night together move.
. . . . . .
Yet if thou wilt my shadow be,
Enjoy thy dearest wish, but see
That like my shadow's property
Thou haste away as I come nigh.

The rest are mainly conventional in reasoning, serious in tone, and uninspired in expression. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, soliloquizes thus:

Change thy mind since she doth change,
  Let not fancy still abuse thee.
Thy untruths cannot seem strange
  When her falsehood doth accuse thee.
Love is dead, and thou art free,
She doth live, but dead to thee.

Campion follows suit, merely substituting heptameters for the shorter lines of Essex:

Harden now thy tired heart, with more than flinty rage;
Ne'er let her false tears henceforth thy constant grief assuage.

In more song-like measures and with less bitterness, however, Campion asks:

Shall I then hope when faith is fled?
  Can I seek love when hope is gone?
Or can I live when love is dead?
  Poorly he lives that can love none.
Her vows are broke, and I am free;
She lost her faith in losing me.

He professes indifference, using that favorite Elizabethan rime:

Now let her change and spare not;
Since she proves strange, I care not.

At the head of the list, socially at least, is King James I of England, who did not scruple to fall in line with his subjects when it came to writing poetry. In verses that only royalty could have palliated, he cries out upon "woman's wit that wavers with the wind," [19] and summons up courage to leave his faithless mistress.

From John Donne, on the other hand, we have something that is obviously much stronger, much nearer to the poet's own heart. Whether from the simplicity of his language or from the force of his thought, we feel that when he discards his mistress he really means it.[20] Not satisfied with mere separation, he must have revenge, and in "The Apparition" he threatens to carry this revenge even beyond the grave; he will send cold chills down his lady's back by haunting her at night. "The Message" breathes more vigor than do most of the verses we have seen:

Send home my long-strayed eyes to me,
Which (oh!) too long have dwelt on thee;
But if they there have learned such ill,
  Such forced fashions
  And false passions,
  That they be
  Made by thee
Fit for no good sight, keep them still.

. . . . . .

Yet send me back my heart and eyes,
That I may know and see thy lies,
And laugh and joy when thou

[19] See below, p. 224.

[20] For the story behind these poems, see E. Gosse, *Life and Letters of John Donne*, N. Y., 1899, I, 70 ff.

Art in anguish,
Or dost languish
For some one
That will none,
Or prove as false as thou.

The lyrics in the song-books seem rather to foreshadow the vogue of two or three decades later, in that their writers take a more independent stand, and do not trouble to call their mistresses false, but hold mere unkindness a sufficient excuse for breaking with them. The nonchalant air is not always convincing, but it shows unmistakable affinities with the attitude summed up as a creed by Suckling, and generally accepted in the verses written during the reigns of James I and Charles I: namely—

I hate a fool that starves her love,
Only to feed her pride.

The song-writers had the egotism, though not the wanton cynicism, of the Cavaliers.

From Robert Jones' *First Book of Songs and Airs* comes a piece which merits quotation only because snatches of it are sung by Sir Toby Belch and the Fool in *Twelfth Night;* its mood vacillates between despair and unconcern, but it is unmistakably rebellious:

Farewell, dear Love! since thou wilt needs be gone,
Mine eyes do show my life is almost done.
Nay, I will never die
So long as I can spy;
There be many mo
Though that she do go.
There be many mo, I fear not.
Why then, let her go, I care not.

A writer in Jones' *Second Book,* though his mistress is just as unresponsive, refuses to let her coldness fret him to the point of death:

> Once did I love where now I have no liking.
> Like can I not, for she was never loving.

But a song from Bateson's *First Set of Madrigals* runs along as moodily as if its author's life were almost done:

> O me! my mistress scorns my love,
> I fear she will most cruel prove.
> I weep, I sigh, I grieve, I groan.
> Yet she regardeth not my moan.
> Then, Love, adieu—it fits not me,
> To weep for her that laughs at thee.

"Farewell, too fair, too chaste but too too cruel," sings a lover in John Dowland's *Third and Last Book of Songs and Airs.* The verses have been attributed, along with several others of the same type, to John Lyly; they do him no great credit, but they show at least a certain restraint which lifts them above the "I-weep-I-sigh-I-grieve-I-groan" variety. The writer concludes:

> Love by neglect (though constant) oft is tired,
> And forc'd from bliss unwillingly to part.

The pastoral mode of the time is reflected in the language and material of many of these songs. A writer in Henry Youll's *Set of Twenty-Four Canzonets* rebels thus against the obduracy of his Phillis:

> Cease, restless thoughts, to vex my careful mind,
> And bid adieu to vain delights of love;

Since Phillis, she, alas! has proved unkind,
Whom my complaints cannot to pity move.
Farewell, unkind! my silly sheep and I
Henceforth will join in equal sympathy.

There is no need to quote further from the song-books; the list in the appendix will show what an exceedingly large number of rebellious verses they contained.

A few of the songs, to be sure, bring up the old complaint of faithlessness. "Can a maid that is well bred . . . break her promise, untrue prove?" wonders an erstwhile lover in Martin Pearson's *Private Music*. Faced with incontrovertible proof that good breeding, in one case at least, is no guarantee against inconstancy, he resolves to think no more of her:

I that did her parts extol,
Will my lavish tongue control.

But most of the broadside ballads, which again serve as an index to popular taste, turn upon the point of obduracy in the mistress. Some of the ballads, as a matter of fact, were borrowed from the works of the most reputable poets and toned down to the vulgar level, for all was grist that came to the ballad-writer's mill. The following has a more nearly literary flavor than most, suggesting that it may have seen better days:

Come! come! come! come! what shall I say
To drive away this doleful day?
For all is vain for to complain
To this my dear that doth disdain.
Therefore I will her quite forego,
For she hath wrought my grief and woe.

And thus I sing, 'My heart is sore:
Therefore, I'll never woo her more.'

The burly, bonny, rough-and-ready men about town by whom and for whom most of these strange and highly amusing ballads were apparently written needed little enough excuse for breaking away from a mistress. A lady could hardly hope to win more than passing attention from these *bons vivants;* and when they severed their amorous chains it was not to "silly sheep" that they turned in equal sympathy, but usually to a cup of sack or a bottle of wine. The woodcut accompanying such a ballad often represented "a club of witty toping boys," [21] and the purport of the text could be seen from such a title as "The Squire's Grief Crown'd with Comfort: Or, Nectar preferr'd before scornful Cynthia." A delightful example of these roistering verses at their poetic worst is "The Bachelor's Fore-cast; or, Cupid Unblest":

Once did I love, and a very pretty girl,
Thinking to make her my own;
Although she did look like the mother of pearl,
Yet now am I fledg'd and flown, brave boys,
Yet now am I fledg'd and flown.

. . . . . .

Since she doth so scorn me, with Sack I'll adorn me,
I will be outwitted by none;
These feminine creatures are absolute cheaters,
But now am I fledg'd and flown, etc.

That the ballad-writers were not always above reproaching their loves with "new-fangleness," however, appears

[21] See, for example, *The Roxburghe Ballads,* ed. J. Ebsworth, Hertford, 1871–99, VI, 226. The phrase actually comes from Sedley's "To Phillis, Who Slighted Him." See below, p. 147.

when we find "The Revolted Lover" declaiming in this wise:

> Farewell! thou faithless girl!
> I'll not sorrow for thee:
> Once I held thee dear as pearl,
> But now I do abhor thee.

The seventeenth-century poets preserved this manly tone in most of their declarations of independence, but they sang at a less strident pitch, and condemned the hard-heartedness of their respective mistresses without sinning against the rules of versification. Though the prevailing mood is one-sided enough, it has not quite the careless egotism that characterized the farewells to love in this period. Dare we suggest that these philosophers could not bear the toothache patiently? At any rate, a touch of bitterness may be found in the most indifferent, and the eyes of some of them are jaundiced completely.

Although William Drummond may "live reliev'd of pain," I wonder whether he is completely happy about the change of state which he records with such a manful attempt to give the impression of triumphant indifference:

> Once did I weep and groan,
> Drink tears, draw loathed breath,
> And all for love of one,
> Who did affect my death.
> But now, thanks to disdain,
> I live reliev'd of pain;
> For sighs, I singing go,
> I burn not as before, no, no, no, no.

Robert Aytoun has many variations on the same theme, but again, for all his bravado, it is to be doubted whether

the severance of the chain does not cost him a pang or two. He exclaims:

> I loved thee once, I'll love no more,
> Thine be the grief, as is the blame,
> Thou art not what thou wert before,
> What reason I should be the same?
> He that can love unlov'd again,
> Hath better store of Love than brain.[22]

His very anxiety to fix the blame on the lady shows, I think, that his mind was not entirely at ease. A certain damsel's laughter irked him not a little:

> Wilt thou—remorseless fair,
> Still laugh while I lament,
> Or shall thy chief contentment be
> To see me malcontent?
> . . . . . .
> But to prevent my shame,
> And to abridge my woe—
> Because thou canst not love thy friend,
> I'll cease to love my foe.[23]

That Aytoun takes these matters quite seriously is shown by the following verse, in which he professes to abandon his suit out of deference to public opinion:

> Shall fear to seem untrue
> To vows of constant duty,
> Make me digest disdains undue,
> From an inconstant beauty?

[22] "To an Inconstant Mistress."
[23] "Adieu to his Mistress."

No! I do not affect,
In vows to seem so holy,
That I would have the world to check
My constancy with folly.[24]

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in a curious poem which, as his editor remarks, is as deviously introspective as any of Browning's, abandons his mistress after apostrophizing her thus:

Exalted Mind! Whose character doth bear
The first idea of Perfection.[25]

This assuredly does not sound rebellious, and the poem contains no definite disclosure of the reason for the poet's abandoning such rare perfection. As far as I can see, it is only on the assumption that her mind was *too* exalted that we can explain the passage that follows:

Thus ends my Love, but this doth grieve me most
That so it ends; but that ends too; this yet,
Besides the Wishes, hopes, and time I lost,
Troubles my mind awhile, that I am set
Free, worse than denied: I can neither boast
Choice nor Success as my Case is, nor get
Pardon from myself, that I loved not
A better Mistress, or her worse. This Debt
Only's her due, still that she be forgot
Ere changed, lest I love none: this done, the taint
Of foul Inconstancy is clear'd at least.
In me, there only rests but to unpaint
Her form in my mind, that so dispossest,
It be a Temple, but without a Saint.[26]

[24] "On an Inconstant Mistress."

[25] "To her Mind."

[26] Lord Herbert's latest editor, Mr. G. C. Moore Smith, thinks that the line "Thus ends my Love," etc., begins a new poem, which he calls "Love's End." But the lines are printed continuously, from "Exalted Mind!" to "without a Saint," in the original edition of 1665 and in the edition of Mr. Churton Collins (1881).

Of one thing I think we can be certain: that a real story underlies this tortuous chain of thought. Men do not write like this for exercise in versification.

James Shirley, from brooding over the fact that the glories of our blood and state are shadows, not substantial things, seems to have lost not only all patience, but all sense of humor as well. The only trustworthy creature in his universe, apparently, was himself. Witness this:

> Proud woman, know I am above
> As much thy anger as thy love.
> I did once think thou hadst a face;
> But when next thou tak'st thy glass,
> If thou canst see through so much paint,
> Pray to thy own, no more my saint.
> Thy eyes, those glow'ring twins, shall be
> No more misleading fires to me, etc.[27]

He can, on occasion, reënforce his rebellion with a blighting anathema:

> Woman, I cannot call thee worse,
> For thy vow-break, take this curse.[28]

Herrick's fancy produced several quaint conceits when he wanted to express his defiance to ladies who received him less favorably than he thought proper. On one occasion he sends to his disdainful mistress what seems to be a forerunner of the modern hand-grenade—a highly explosive bubble, made of his sighs and tears. When it has rolled "like a blasting Planet," or "like to a dreadful Comet in the Air," he instructs it:

[27] "To the Proud Mistress."
[28] "Curse."

Then like a Globe, or Ball of Wild-fire, fly,
And break thyself in shivers on her eye.[29]

The question of the reality or unreality of Herrick's mistresses is one which has intrigued more than one critic. Certainly one has one's own opinion regarding a country vicar who, though no evidence remains of any irregularity in his life, boasts of affairs with Sappho, Anthea, Electra, Myrrha, Corinna, Perilla, Lucia, Dianeme, Biancha, Perenna, Phillis, Sylvia, Oenone, and "Julia, prime of all." While Mr. Gosse discards Perilla, Silvia, Anthea, and the *deæ minores* as out-and-out fictions, he clings to Julia.[30] Mr. Moorman, on the other hand, makes a clean sweep by asserting that there is "no sufficient reason for supposing that Julia had any more real existence than Corinna, Anthea, or any of the other classically named mistresses to whom the poet makes love." [31] He points out that while Herrick asks Julia to close his eyes when death overtakes him (an argument advanced by Gosse in favor of her real existence), he makes the same request of Perilla, and the situation would obviously be an awkward one if two of his ex-mistresses should meet thus over his corpse.[32]

While this knowledge may lessen the effect upon us of Herrick's defiant verses addressed "To Myrrha Hard-Hearted," it may also make us more leniently disposed toward the theological precept which he lays down in the last two lines, unmindful of its paradoxical nature:

Fold now thine arms, and hang the head,
Like to a Lily withered:

[29] "The Bubble. A Song."
[30] E. Gosse, *Seventeenth Century Studies*, 4th ed. London, 1913, pp. 136–7.
[31] F. W. Moorman, *Robert Herrick*, London, 1910, p. 74.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Next, look thou like a sickly Moon;
Or like Jocasta in a swoon.

. . . . . .

And all because, Fair Maid, thou art
Insensible of all my smart;
And of those evil days that be
Now posting on to punish thee.
The Gods are easy, and condemn
All such as are not soft like them.

Carew feels no necessity for justifying himself in the eyes of the world when he writes to his lady:

I have learn'd thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou.[33]

Even when he falls back upon the old reliable theme of inconstancy, he shows a sublime confidence in his ability to console himself for her loss:

When thou, poor Excommunicate
From all the joys of Love, shall see
The full reward and glorious fate
Which my strong faith shall purchase me,
Then curse thine own inconstancy!

A fairer hand than thine shall cure
That heart which thy false oaths did wound,
And to my soul a soul more pure
Then thine shall by Love's hand be bound,
And both with equal glory crown'd.[34]

Carew never doubted that "a fairer hand" would be waiting for him; on the contrary, his conception of a "full

[33] "Disdain Returned."
[34] "To My Inconstant Mistress."

reward and glorious fate" stopped not at one hand, nor at one pair of hands, but called, as we shall see, for at least ten pairs:

> But say, O very woman, why to me
> The fit of weakness and inconstancy?
> What forfeit have I made of word or vow,
> That I am rackt on thy displeasure now?
> . . . . . .
> Hear, and be sorry for't, I will not die
> T'expiate the crime of levity.
> I walk (not cross-arm'd neither), eat and live,
> Yea, for to pity thy neglect not grieve,
> Nor envy him that by my loss hath won,
> That thou art from thy faith and promise gone.
> . . . . . .
> Nor doubt I but for one that proves like you,
> I shall find ten as fair, and yet more true.[35]

Lovelace, like the rest, has his renunciation of allegiance to a lady, whose sole crime is coldness:

> That frown, Aminta, now hath drown'd
> Thy bright front's pow'r and crown'd
> Me that was bound.
> No, no, deceived cruel, no!
> Love's fiery darts,
> Till tipt with kisses, never kindle hearts.[36]

He takes a decidedly novel stand, to be sure, in his poem, "Love Made in the First Age," wherein he laments the days when

> It was not thought a crime
> In direct Hebrew for to woo.

[35] "To his Inconstant Mistress."
[36] "Courante Monsieur."

Having conjured up for himself a picture of this ideal time, he is so charmed by it that he resolves to have nothing more to do with a degenerate epoch in which men "court in English backward too." His Chloris, who could hardly have foreseen such a result when her disregard for his suit first set him off on such fancies, must look elsewhere for admirers:

> Now, Chloris, miserably crave
> The offer'd bliss you would not have,
> Which evermore I must deny.

The most widely known contribution to this group of poems is Suckling's "Siege," in which, with military imagery, he celebrates his withdrawal from a hopeless infatuation. Its terse vividness, its lilt, and its uncompromising Cavalier arrogance have won it a place in many anthologies; in it the author sums up his attitude in a pair of lines that might well be the battle-cry of a very important group of rebellious lovers. He seems to have schooled himself, both late and soon, in the rejection of sometime mistresses, so that the effort cost him never a twinge. Thus he remarks, with mere wonderment at the evanescence of love:

> Dost thou see how unregarded now
> That piece of beauty passes?
> There was a time when I did vow
> To that alone;
> But mark the fates of faces;
> The red and white works now no more on me,
> Than if it could not show, or I not see.

If an excuse is not ready at hand, he feels no hesitation about rebelling with no stated reason whatever:

I will not love one minute more, I swear,
No, not a minute, not a sigh or tear
Thou gett'st from me, or one kind look again,
Though thou shouldst court me to't and wouldst begin.[37]

This brings us to the Puritan régime, during which, it seems, men were so busy overthrowing established political power, and readjusting themselves after it was overthrown, that they forgot their amorous chains, or, if they freed themselves, did so without any fuss. I do not call such a poem as "To Lucasta, On Going to the Wars" a revolt, since it denotes at most a division of allegiance between love and honor—a division which, according to the poet's statement, serves to exalt his love to a higher plane. It is curious to contrast with this, however, a ballad entitled "The Cavalier's Farewell to his Mistress, Being Called to the Wars," in which the Cavalier, in circumstances precisely like those that confronted Lovelace, pays no graceful compliment to his lady but simply informs her that he has more important business than staying with her. It will be noticed that while far more Puritans than Cavaliers were being called to the wars, the only example of a lover who used the campaign as an excuse for getting rid of his mistress comes from the latter class. They, after all, were defending, not overthrowing, a government, so their revolutionary instincts sought another outlet.

Cowley's *Mistress,* of course, was not published until 1647, after the fighting had ceased and the Puritans were in full control, but the verses sound very much as though they had been written before the Roundheads suppressed the rebellious lovers. Especially Cavalier-like is his boast

[37] "Love Turned to Hatred."

that he had penetrated farther than any other living man into the trackless wastes of love:

> Teach me to love! go teach thyself more wit;
> I chief professor am of it.
> . . . . . .
> 'Tis I who love's Columbus am.[38]

Apparently he knew no more than the others, however, about the art of keeping one's mistress faithful; the most that can be said for him is that he could show unmistakably what he thought of one who had proved inconstant:

> 'Tis very true, I thought you once as fair
> As women in th'idea are;
> . . . . . .
> But since I know thy falsehood and thy pride,
> And all thy thousand faults beside,
> A very Moor, methinks, plac'd near to thee,
> White as his teeth would seem to be.[39]

While we might suppose that "Love's Columbus" would be satisfied with nothing less than exploring new or little-known paths—discovering a new continent or a north-west passage—the fact is that Cowley's other revolt is simply a translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha, the well-known *Quis multa gracilis*.[40] This fact alone might lead one to suspect the truth about Cowley's love-affairs; for, if Mr. Gosse speaks with authority, then Cowley, "never having had the courage to speak of love to a single woman, was about to publish, in 1648, a circumstantial account of

[38] "The Prophet."
[39] "Not Fair."
[40] "Ode, in Imitation of Horace's Ode."

his affairs with more than one-and-twenty mistresses." [41]

After the Restoration, this same class returned to the amorous fray with renewed vigor. Their war-cries rang with the same arrogant independence that marked those of pre-Revolution days, but their grounds of complaint show a more equal division between obduracy and inconstancy. It will be well to observe the two groups separately.

Beginning the obduracy list with Edward Howard—who wrote a three-hundred-and-sixty-five-page chronicle of Charles I's downfall in incredibly bad verse, but reached a somewhat higher level in a few short lyrics—we find him, like Suckling, emphasizing his revolt with a military comparison:

> Now having proved thy fond delays
> With all thy pride and scorn,
> No more my love shall make essays,
> Since, to be forlorn,
> What soldier, that would honor win,
> Will teach his prowess such a sin?

Sedley echoes the broadside ballads in preferring wine to the cold shoulder offered him by a certain Phillis:

> Since you no longer will be kind,
> But my embraces shun,
> Bacchus shall ease my am'rous mind,
> To his embrace I run.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then welcome more enduring joys,
> Long shall my doctor be,
> A club of witty, toping boys,
> And love, adieu to thee.[42]

[41] *Seventeenth Century Studies*, p. 136.
[42] "To Phillis, Who Slighted Him."

Urania, however, eases his amorous mind by her scorn alone, and he parts from her in the conventional manner:

> Thanks, fair Urania, to your scorn,
> I now am free as I was born
> Of all the pain that I endur'd.
> By your late coldness I am cur'd.[43]

Thomas Flatman and Philip Ayres delve into their respective pasts for material. The former, who tells us that his poems show faithfully "when 'twas Fair Weather, when 'twas Changeable, and when the Quicksilver fell down to storm and Tempest" [44] with him, gives the following account of a moment in which the barometric reading was comparatively low:

> I did but crave that I might kiss
> If not her lips, at least her hand.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> She (would you think it?) in a fume
> Turned about and left the room.
>
> 'Well, Chariessa,' then said I,
> 'If it must thus for ever be,
> I can renounce my slavery
> And, since you will not, can be free.'
> Many a time she made me die,
> Yet (would you think it?) I loved the more;
> But I'll not take it as heretofore,
> Not I, I'll vow, not I.[45]

Ayres, remembering how a heart of ice did once inflame his heart, utters "A Defiance, returning to the place of his past Amours":

[43] "The Indifference."
[44] *Poems and Songs*, by Thomas Flatman, 3rd ed., 1682, Preface.
[45] "The Slight."

With my late damp, all sparks of love expire,
My feet approach, yet does my soul retire,
Tho' near her presence, I can justly say,
My eyes and mind took quite another way.

Much of Thomas Stanley's life, to judge from his verses, must have been spent in moving about from one disdainful mistress to another. Since it is impossible to ascertain the order in which these poems were written, nothing can prevent us from arranging them in a manner that will show Stanley proceeding from a rather splenetic outburst of defiance and surprise at his first disappointment, through a period of growing equanimity, to a point where long habit has enabled him to treat the matter with actual cheerfulness. Typical of the first stage is "The Loss," in which, after declaring his intention of leaving the field, he fires a parting shot:

Yet ere I go,
Disdainful Beauty, thou shalt be
So wretched as to know
What joys thou flingst away with me.

These joys, needless to say, are painted in the most enchanting colors. By the time he wrote the following song, however, he had acquired a fine nonchalance:

I prithee let my heart alone!
  Since 'tis now raised above thee:
Not all the beauty thou dost own
  Again can make me love thee.
He that was shipwreck'd once before
  By such a Siren's call,
And yet neglects to shun the shore,
  Deserves a second fall.

Finally, "The Repulse" shows an optimism, a determination to look on the bright side of things, that would do credit to Pollyanna herself:

> Not that by this disdain
> I am releas'd
> And freed from thy tyrannic chain,
> Do I myself think blest;
> . . . . . .
> Nor yet that unconfin'd
> I now may rove,
> And with new beauties please my mind;
> But that thou ne'er didst love!
> . . . . . .
> Now I've not lost that bliss
> I ne'er possess'd;
> And, spite of Fate, am blest in this:
> That I was never blest.

That rollicking collection, *Pills to Purge Melancholy*—mostly by Tom Durfey—is liberally sprinkled with songs against unresponsive damsels. Durfey, according to his own estimate, cherished a vain affection for "some thirty or forty or fifty at least," [46] so it is not surprising that he should have dismissed a half-dozen or so, if only to make room for more. Poetically, most of these "pills" are of little value, and resemble a great many others too closely to warrant extensive quotation. Here is one:

> My life and my death were once in your pow'r,
> I languish'd each moment, and dy'd ev'ry hour;
> But now your ill usage has open'd my eyes,
> I can free my poor heart, and give others advice.

[46] See below, p. 205.

A tyrannical Phillis is dethroned:

> No, Phillis, tho' you've all the charms
> Ambitious woman can desire;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Yet you may practise all your arts,
> In vain to make a slave of me;
> You ne'er shall re-engage my heart,
> Revolted from your tyranny.

Sometimes no reason at all is given for the rebellion, although it is to be assumed that the writer has found the game not worth the candle:

> Tormenting Beauty, leave my breast,
> In spite of Chloe I'll have rest;
> In vain is all her siren art,
> Still longer to hold my troubled heart;
> For I'm resolv'd to break the chain,
> And o'er her charms the conquest gain.

As for the verses in this period which bring a charge of inconstancy to back up the revolt, Charles Cotton seems to have produced them most extensively. Cotton, according to one critic, "was too much of a realist to be a Platonist in love, and too wholesome to be a cynic." [47] Perhaps this explains why he took his affairs so seriously, for he could neither withdraw into the realm of ideas nor accept his defeats with the callousness of one who looks for nothing good in the worst of all possible worlds. Nor could he say, with Stanley:

> Now I've not lost that bliss
> I ne'er possess'd;

[47] C. J. Sembower, *Life and Poetry of Charles Cotton*, N. Y., 1911, p. 24.

And, spite of Fate, am blest in this:
That I was never blest.

On the contrary, he was doomed everlastingly to see his bliss flit away after a first taste had aroused his desire for more. Time and time again he makes the same complaint, yet with undiminished vigor. That he was apt to generalize from his individual experiences with female perfidy is only too evident.

Go, false one, now I see the cheat,
Your love was all a counterfeit,
And I was gull'd to think that you
Or any she, could long be true.

And then again:

False one, farewell, thou hast releast
The fire, imprison'd in my breast;
Your beauties make not half the show
They did a year or two ago;
For now I find,
The beauties those fair walls enshrin'd
Foul, and deform'd appear.
Ah! where
In woman is a spotless mind? [48]

He reminds one of John Donne, both in this tendency to judge the whole sex by those who have betrayed him, and in the vigor of his expression. This is strong:

For ever, then, farewell;
'Tis a long leave I take, but oh!

[48] "Ode to Chloe."

To tarry with thee here is Hell,
  And twenty thousand Hells to go,
For ever, though, farewell.[49]

And so he slashes right and left, sometimes in language a little more blunt than we are accustomed to find in what goes by the name of polite literature. When he wants to give an air of nonchalance to his leave-taking, he does not trust his own genius but resorts, as so many other English poets have done, to imitating Horace.[50] Once he sets himself, like Suckling, to meditate on the passing of fancy, but he cannot sustain for long Suckling's insolent aloofness:

How comes it to pass with so little ado
  That I've broken my fetters and chains,
And that no remembrance of all my great woe
  But like that of a tale now remains?
I no more for a star now do Phillis esteem,
And all her perfections to me now do seem
  But like dreams when I've malted my brains.

. . . . . .

Yet, sot that I was, I did once cry and blubber
  For this damnable piece of infection,
Which none could have done but an owl and a lubber,
  But his sense would have been his protection;
And for which on myself I will now pass this sentence,
That to th'hour of my death I will weep for repentance
  That I ever did weep for affection.

As the sentiment and the language of this poem grow more and more poignant, the rest is hardly appropriate for quotation, even in a work of scholarship.

[49] "Virelay."
[50] "The False One."

Sir Aston Cokaine throws down his gauntlet before Plautia, whose charms he carefully enumerates but sternly rejects:

> For thou art false, and wilt be so:
> I else no other fair would woo.
> Away, therefore, tempt me no more!
> I'll not be won with all thy store.[51]

Stanley found one damsel, at least, who received him with open arms, but this, instead of comforting him, merely aggravated the displeasure he felt when he learned that he was not the only one so received:

> No, I will sooner trust the wind,
> When, falsely kind,
> It courts the pregnant sails into a storm,
> And when the smiling waves persuade,
> Be willingly betray'd,
> Than thy deceitful vows or form.

William Walsh, a sworn enemy to romantic affectations, addresses two of his "elegies" to false mistresses. He is prosaic, but brief and direct:

> Celia, your tricks will now no longer pass,
> And I'm no more the fool that once I was.[52]

In the other elegy, though he indulges in vituperation, he assures us that he has not lost his faith in womankind because of one unfortunate choice; on the contrary, he means to console himself by having another try:

[51] "To Plautia." This resembles an old Irish song adapted by Douglas Hyde ("I Shall Not Die for Thee"), as well as by Padraic Colum and A. P. Graves. Cokaine himself was an Irishman.

[52] "Elegy, to his False Mistress."

Adieu! while thus I waste my time in vain,
Sure there are maids I might entirely gain:
I'll search for such, and to the first that's true,
Resign the heart so hardly freed from you.[53]

Durfey and the other refractory lovers in *Pills to Purge Melancholy* seldom trouble to accuse their mistresses of double-dealing, but leave them forthwith, as we have already seen. If they feel the need of an excuse at all, vanity and coquetry usually answer the purpose. We have heard the case of him who, "forced by a cruel lawless fate, . . . loved a nymph with passion," and we have noted his subsequent boorish behavior. We cannot take leave of this inimitable collection, however, without quoting one more manly outburst, whose tone of cheery defiance has seldom been equalled:

Z—ds Madam, return me my heart,
Or by the Lord Harry I'll make ye;
Tho' you sleep when I talk of my smart,
As I hope to be knighted I'll wake ye;
If you rant, why by Jove,
Then I'll rant as well as you;
There's no body cares for your puffing,
You're mistaken in me;
Nay prithee, prithee, prithee pish,
We'll try who's the best at a huffing.

The reader of this spirited effort is apt to be so carried away by it that, like the writer, he will overlook the lamentable disintegration of the rime and scansion in the last six lines. Of such stuff are true rebels made, and this jaunty sincerity, even in doggerel, contrasts agreeably with

[53] "Elegy, upon Quitting his Mistress."

the atmosphere of the period to which we are now coming.

The reign of artificiality and imitation which set in so markedly toward the end of the century had given signs of its coming while yet far off. Even of the verses we have just been passing in review, hardly one retains that fresh, simple vigor, that artistic sincerity, that characterize Herrick, Suckling, and Lovelace even in their expressions of nonchalant disdain. Just as the love-verses in the latter half of the century became conventionalized, being compounded of little more than a few "flames," "darts," and "smarts" interspersed with what we should now call obscenity, so the rebellious poems followed one another in the beaten track. Some writers even resorted to avowed imitations of Horace, who exerted a profound influence on English poetry during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Nahum Tate, a poet laureate, imitated both the Ode to Pyrrha [54] and the Epode to Neæra,[55] and the latter was also imitated by William Somerville.[56] Both of these poems, of course, are rebellions based on faithlessness.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century literary reformers had succeeded in eliminating practically all obscenity from polite literature, and only the flames, darts, and smarts remained. As for rebellions, they became extremely scarce, and, with one or two exceptions, were poor, lean stuff at that. A few of the old ones were reprinted in anthologies and song-books, but the better pseudo-classicists felt, apparently, that opposition to the sovereign power of love was not quite correct, and they wrote nothing that entitles them to representation here,

[54] "Hor. Ode 5th. lib. 3."
[55] "The Inconstant."
[56] "The Perjured Mistress."

unless we can class Prior as one of them. The age was essentially imitative, and if Horace had not occasionally turned rebel in his affairs of the heart we should probably find the eighteenth century an absolute desert for the purposes of this discussion.[57]

Assuming, on the authority of Horace and a few other classical examples, that a revolt against one's mistress, if not in the very best of taste, was not downright bad form, a few very minor poets ventured to hurl translations and paraphrases of rebellious verses composed by others, and some slightly less minor poets composed little ineffective defiances of their own. *Quis multa gracilis* and Epode XV to Neæra make their appearance again in the works of William Hamilton [58] and Thomas Yalden [59] respectively. Dr. Frank Sayers' "Despairing Lover" is really an imitation of Martial, though not expressly so called. Samuel Derrick openly imitates Donne's "Message," [60] managing in some subtle and inexplicable way to eradicate every trace of the spirit and verve that animate the original. Oliver Goldsmith, translating a French poem, contributes the best of these non-original verses; after weighing in his mind the choice of a gift for his mistress, he decides, in the last stanza:

> I'll give thee something yet unpaid,
> Not less sincere than civil;
> I'll give thee—ah! too charming maid,
> I'll give thee—to the devil.[61]

[57] An eighteenth-century editor of the poems of Richard Corbet commented as follows upon a piece in which Corbet makes a very ungallant attack on a certain Mistress Mallet: "For this . . . the author must be screened under the example of Horace, Ep. viii and xii."—See Chalmers' *English Poets*, V, 560.

[58] "Horace, Book I, Ode V."

[59] "To his Perjured Mistress."

[60] "A Song, Imitated from Dr. Donne."

[61] "The Gift."

Among the poems that are not paraphrases of verse already existing, there is yet a stylistic sameness and artificiality that make them dreary reading. The only oases in this desert, as we shall see, come a little later in a few of Burns' songs, which are probably adaptations of folk-poetry. The rest are all too obviously made to order for polite consumption.

Matthew Prior, in the passionless mode of *vers de société,* takes leave of Amynta, not for any shortcomings or misdemeanors on her part, but simply because he has had his fill:

> Farewell, Amynta, we must part;
> The charm has lost its power,
> Which held so fast my captiv'd heart
> Until this fatal hour.

Nor does Phillis present so infinite a variety that he can remain subject very long to her charms:

> Phillis, since we have both been kind,
> And of each other had our fill;
> Tell me what pleasure you can find,
> In forcing nature 'gainst her will.

A new complaint, at least, is discovered by James Hammond, a minor poet whom Chesterfield lauded, and whose unrequited love, we are told, actually disordered his understanding for a time.[62] In one of his *Love-Elegies,* "He Upbraids and Threatens the Avarice of Neæra, and Resolves to Quit Her." Here, after hoping that sundry unpleasant events shall befall his parsimonious mistress dur-

[62] See Anderson's *British Poets,* VIII, 585.

ing her lifetime, he visits his displeasure even upon her corpse:

> When thou dy'st, may not one heart be griev'd,
> May not one tear bedew the lonely tomb.

There are occasional reminiscences of the seventeenth-century diatribes against obdurate or inconstant mistresses. John Cunningham lodges the familiar complaint, in conventional terms, in "Daphne, A Song":

> No longer, Daphne, I admire
> The graces in thine eyes;
> Continued coldness kills desire,
> And famish'd passion dies.

Soame Jenyns, on the other hand, excuses his faithlessness to Celia on the ground that she set the example:

> For why, since you forgot your vow,
> Should I remember mine? [63]

Chatterton, pretending to be on the eve of a long voyage, bids adieu "To Miss B—sh, of Bristol," in whose company he has spent some blissful hours. This awakens so many memories that he nearly gives up the trip, but a little careful thought convinces him that the painfulness of the affair outweighed any pleasure that he may have derived from it, so he resolves to go:

> Hence, soft scenes of painted woe,
> Spite of the dear delight I'll go,
> Forget her, and be blest.

[63] "When First I Sought Fair Celia's Love."

Now, this is all very well until we stop to consider that Chatterton died at the age of eighteen, and that this poem does not represent the feelings of an adolescent youth—not even of so remarkable a youth as Chatterton. With suspicions aroused, we look through his collected poems and find celebrated there more amorous conquests than could possibly have been crowded into those few busy years—for Chatterton had his hands more than full, with forging ancient manuscripts, working in a solicitor's office, writing criticisms, and picking up odd bits of hack work in what proved to be a futile effort to earn his bread. Hence, we investigate his biography, and find that in all probability not a single one of these love-affairs really occurred—not to Chatterton, at any rate, though some of the verses were written expressly for friends.[64] Like Herrick and Cowley, he made a set of purely imaginary conquests which, according to one biographer, are "about as veracious as were his old Rowley poems. However precocious lads of fifteen or sixteen may be, they cannot be taken seriously, especially when they are poets, if they brag about their amorous exploits." [65]

Cowper—next to Burns perhaps the best known of the rebels of this period—remembers the sometime power of Celia over his and other hearts, but since they have all gained their liberty he cannot refrain from bursting into song:

> No more shall hapless Celia's ears
> Be flattered with the cries
> Of lovers drowned in floods of tears,
> Or murder'd by her eyes;

[64] See C. E. Russell, *Thomas Chatterton*, N. Y., 1908, p. 92 and pp. 173–4.
[65] J. H. Ingram, *The True Chatterton*, N. Y., n. d., p. 89.

No serenades to break her rest,
No songs her slumbers to molest,
With my fa, la, la, la, etc.

If the conventional imagery and the *fa la*'s here cause doubt as to the writer's sincerity, how much more skeptical should we be when the swift anapests throng to hearten the Earl of Carlisle, who explains how he broke away from *his* Celia:

My heart's mighty empire bright Celia possest,
And reign'd a most absolute Queen in my breast;
Till too far she presum'd on the power that I gave.
. . . . . .
In distress to Amelia my griefs I impart,
Amelia was destin'd to conquer my heart;
She summon'd each beauty to rise up in arms,
And the tyrant drove out by the force of her charms.

In this way, and worse, they go along. It remained for the Scots, it seems, to redeem somewhat the monotonous artificiality of their contemporaries. A small group of them—Ramsay, Burns, and, later, Hogg—furnished a few verses that ring with varying degrees of naturalness, but all of which show more real feeling and less restraint than do those we have been reviewing. Allan Ramsay, casting about for a way to cure his love, discovered, just as the Earl of Carlisle and many another have done, that "one fire burns out another's burning":

When, by her whom I long lov'd,
I scorn'd was and deserted,
Low with despair my spirits mov'd
To be for ever parted.

Thus drooped I, till diviner grace
I found in Peggy's mind and face;
Ingratitude appear'd then base,
But virtue more engaging.[66]

While even this may sound foppish, we find in Burns, on the other hand, a vigorous and convincing robustness—at least, as long as he employs the Scottish dialect, and writes songs smelling of the soil. The same cannot be said of his more refined, more artificial poems, such as the one (written to fit the case of a jilted friend) in which he longs to seek forgetfulness of his amorous mischances by retiring into "a cave on some wild distant shore."[67] Greatly to be preferred are the plain, straightforward verses, like these:

O fare thee weel, my bonie lass,
O fare thee weel, my hiney!
Thou art a gay an' bonie lass,
But thou hast a waukrife minnie.[68]

The "waukrife minnie" is at least a new theme, while falsehood, the subject of the other poem, has become almost wearisome. The following song was written by Burns about the age of seventeen, and, according to his sister, refers to a young lady of the parish who behaved as Tibbie does herein:

O Tibbie I hae seen the day
Ye wadna been sae shy;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
But trowth, I care na by.

[66] "Love's Cure."
[67] "Had I a Cave on Some Wild Distant Shore."
[68] "A Waukrife Minnie."

If this and other verses do not commemorate actual affairs, it is not because Burns' experience did not provide him with ample material. By his own statement, his heart in youth "was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other." [69] Considering that one goddess would have to be deposed before another were enthroned, he had an opportunity to make valuable observations for such poems as these. By the time he was twenty-eight he said of himself: "My heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j'ai eu l'honneur d'être un miserable esclave.*" [70]

As might be expected from this last avowal, Burns does not always reveal his attitude at the beginning of a poem; we should hardly expect to find a revolt in a verse which starts:

> Here's to thy health, my bonie lass,
> Gude night and joy be with thee.

But, having admired her as he would admire the stars on a wintry night, he perversely goes on:

> I'll come na mair to thy bower-door,
> To tell thee that I lo'e thee,
> O dinna think, my pretty pink,
> But I can live without thee:

[69] In a letter; *Complete Works of Robert Burns*, ed. Alexander Smith, p. 343.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 351.

I vow and swear, I dinna care,
How lang ye look about ye.

Here, in spite of a certain amount of internal rime, the language seems far more genuine than that which Prior's generation addressed to its Celias and Amyntas, even in sending them to the devil. Indeed, Burns was a sworn enemy to "the whining cant of love," which he said was "as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, Cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline . . . a senseless rabble." [71] He was neither writing down to the level of the peasants nor writing up to the level of the aristocrats. "She's fair and fause," says he of another girl, whom he loved "meikle and lang," but who, after all, is not worth the trouble she cost him. As everyone knows,

Woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lass gang.

The great Romantic poets were not, on the whole, a rebel race, though one or two of them waved the red flag with considerable vigor. No matter how many broken hearts may have strewn their path in real life, most of these men professed only exalted and abiding passion in their verse. Coleridge, to be sure, contributed "A Lover's Complaint to his Mistress, who deserted him in quest of a more wealthy husband in the East Indies," a poem in which the impecunious lover expresses a hope that wind and wave will prove as deceitful to his mistress as she has been to him. While this was written before Coleridge was

[71] *Ibid.*

twenty, and certainly has no autobiographical significance, it should not be supposed that he was incapable of entertaining such sentiments. After an unexpected meeting with an old flame, he could write: "I neither ate nor slept yesterday. But love is a local anguish; I am sixteen miles distant, and am not half so miserable." [72] It should also be remarked that between October, 1794, when he had placed Mary Evans in the sanctuary of his heart, "not to be torn from thence but with the strings that grapple it to life," [73] and October, 1795, when he married Sarah Fricker, whom he called "the woman I love best of all created beings" [74]—during this twelve-month period, he must have undergone some emotional change not readily distinguishable from the reaction of a genuine rebellious lover.

The proud, irascible Landor cannot suffer himself always to be dominated, but retaliates with harsh rebuffs:

> Little it interests me how
> Some insolent usurper now
> Divides your narrow chair;
> Little heed I whose hand is placed
> (No, nor how far) around your waist,
> Or paddles in your hair.

Since Landor at the age of twenty-one had a love adventure that "was probably painful," but "with the same resolute will that could turn aside from pain as well as pleasure where either might have overwhelmed another man, he was able very speedily to forget it," [75] we may conjecture, at least, that this poem was inspired by a real

[72] *Letters*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, London, 1895, I, 78.
[73] *Ibid.*, I, 125.
[74] *Ibid.*, I, 136.
[75] J. Forster, *Walter Savage Landor*, Boston, 1869, p. 46.

incident. Furthermore, considering that even his sister was forced to admit his high susceptibility to mere prettiness in the opposite sex,[76] we may not unreasonably suppose that he had forgotten the damsel of the narrow chair and was closing another affair when his indignation again boiled over:

> Go on, go on, and love away!
> Mine was, another's is, the day.
> Go on, go on, thou false one! now
> Upon his shoulder rest thy brow,
> And look into his eyes until
> Thy own, to find them colder, fill.

The weakness of the Romantics in this department of verse, however, did not affect Tom Moore, who, whether to make up for the shortcomings of his coevals or to satisfy some inner urge, trained a whole battery of light and heavy artillery upon his mistresses, real or imaginary. The only indication I have been able to find of a background for these attacks comes from a letter in which he says: "I must inform you, 'to God's pleasure and both our comforts,' that I am not writing *love-verses*. I begin at last to find out that *politics* is the only thing minded in this country, and that it is better even to *rebel* against government, than have nothing to do with it; so I am writing politics: but all I fear is, that my former ill-luck will rise up against me in a new shape, and that as I could not write *Love* without getting into ——, so I shall not be able to write *politics* without getting into treason." [77] His heavy guns discharge serious missiles such as this:

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[77] Moore, *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence*, ed. Lord Russell, London, 1853, I, 225.

Fare thee well, thou lovely one!
Lovely still, but dear no more.[78]

The following large-caliber shell suggests, to the eye at least, Moore's favorite rocking-horse versification, but for once he misleads us:

But shall I still go seek within those arms
A joy wherein affection has no part?
No, no, farewell! You give me but your charms,
When I had fondly thought you gave your heart.[79]

He had not really banished the anapest, but he put it into short lines:

When I loved you, I can't but allow,
I had many an exquisite minute;
But the scorn that I feel for you now
Hath even more luxury in it.[80]

His unsatisfactory mistresses—the general run of them, at least—fall into two classes: besides those who give only their charms when he thought they gave their heart, there is a group composed of those who yield to him as thoroughly as he could wish, but who prove just as complaisant to other men besides. To the latter group belongs the lady addressed in the following reproach, which, by the way, includes a neat compliment to Tom Moore:

But no, 'tis o'er, and—thus we part,
Never to meet again—no, never.
False woman, what a mind and heart
Thy treachery has undone for ever! [81]

[78] "Sicilian Air."
[79] "To Julia."
[80] "To ——."
[81] "To ——" ('Tis Time, I Feel, to Leave Thee Now).

For light gunfire, or nonchalant dismissals, Moore seems to have had no ammunition of his own making, for he was compelled to borrow from Catullus:

> Cease the sighing fool to play;
> Cease to trifle life away, etc.[82]

and from Martial:

> I could resign that eye of blue.
> . . . . . .
> In short, so well I've learned to fast,
> That, sooth, my love, I know not whether
> I might not bring myself at last,
> To—do without you altogether.[83]

If Moore was not at his best in writing serious poems against ladies, Praed was even more out of his element, and in him we begin to feel the deadly influence of polite bombast and melodramatic sentiment which poison so much Victorian poetry. Inflated language was the tune of the time, and it covered a multitude of inconsistencies. Thus Praed, dismissing an inconstant maiden, begins:

> Farewell;—I will not now
> The wasted theme renew; [84]

then he preceeds to renew and waste it for many lines, ending:

> And since I wept not here
> To call you false and vain,
> I think I shall not shed one tear
> For all this world again.

[82] "Imitation of Catullus."
[83] "To Cloe."
[84] "The Parting."

The knowledge that he can no longer weep is not in itself distressing—in fact, after our experience with some of the older poets who "wept bucketfuls of tears," this condition is something of a relief—but the tragically hollow tone in which he, together with many later poets, announces his disability, often makes one regret the time when lachrymal glands functioned more freely. "Lady, I loved you all last year," says Praed in a poem which, somehow, has gotten into Carolyn Wells' *Nonsense Anthology:*

> But all is over! When the sun
> Dries up the boundless main,
> When black is white, false-hearted one,
> I may be yours again! [85]

Slightly better, because written in Praed's accustomed *vers de société* mood, is this well-groomed bit:

> Where is Miss Myrtle? can any one tell?
> . . . . . .
> Some day she'll find out it was not very wise
> To laugh at the breath of a true lover's sighs;
> After all, Fanny Myrtle is not such a prize:
> Where is she gone, where is she gone?
> Louisa Dalrymple has exquisite eyes;
> And I'll no longer be alone!

This, however, is one of the very few sparks of light in the gathering gloom. In fact, the reader without a strong, agile sense of humor will probably not come through the next few pages unscathed, for the rhetoricians are upon us. These are the people who hide their pain so demonstratively that one wonders whether, at times, they do not

[85] "A Song of Impossibilities."

forget what the original cause of the pain was, and simply go on writing because it sounds so impressive. What heart but bleeds for Alaric Watts, when he bares his tortured soul in "A Farewell":

> Yes,—I will join the world again,
> And mingle with the crowd;
> And though my mirth may be but pain,
> My laughter, wilderment of brain,—
> At least it shall be loud!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'Tis done—the task of soul is taught;
> At length I've burst the spell,
> Which, round my heart so firmly wrought,
> Fettered each loftier, nobler thought;
> And now, FAREWELL—FAREWELL!

The effect of the capitals in the last line (I can hear Watts saying) is particularly fine.

The hobby-horse is not forgot by Thomas Love Peacock, who rides it triumphantly through this valediction:

> Matilda, farewell! Fate has doom'd us to part,
> But the prospect occasions no pang to my heart;
> No longer is love with my reason at strife,
> Though once thou wert dearer, far dearer than life.

T. H. Bayly, another galloping poet, comes riding, riding through a revolt that suggests all the aboriginal wildness of a Victorian ballroom:

> Not have me! not love me! Oh! what have I said?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Remember, remember, I might call him out,
> But, Madam, you're scarcely worth fighting about;

My sword shall be stainless in blade and in hilt,
I thought you a jewel, I find you a jilt.[86]

The Bulwer-Lyttons, father and son, sympathized readily with the fustian school, and they decked out their mutinies in funereal splendor. Edward George Earle Lytton, we see, fears no more the heat of the sun, nor the furious winter's rages:

Farewell to the smile of the sun,
The cheerful religion of Trust!
I centred my future in One,
And wake as it crumbles to dust!

The malign influence of the abovementioned One was exercised upon the poet with such distressing thoroughness that—

Thou hast blighted existence for me,
Thou hast left not a germ for the flower.

The blighted existence satisfies the first part of the title, which is "Lost and Avenged"; we have seen the loss, but the revenge has still to appear. We soon discover that it consists in her metaphorical dethronement by the author, whose energies are not so completely decayed but that he can

Take back the all I had given:
Thy charm, with my folly, is o'er;
From the rank I assign'd thee in heaven,
Descend to thy level once more.

His son, "Owen Meredith," made some attempt to treat these matters in a less somber tone, but his ghastly non-

[86] "The Rejected."

chalance is the sort to send chills down one's spine. Witness "The Last Time that I Met Lady Ruth,"—in which, following the best Victorian traditions, the writer never expressly tells us that he and the lady entertained, as they would have put it, reciprocal sentiments of the warmest esteem. But no other sentiments could in any way account for the grim conclusion:

> We talked of the House, and the late long rains,
> And the crush at the French Ambassador's ball,
> And . . . well, I have not blown out my brains.
> You see I can laugh. That is all.

His laughter, like Watts', is more loud than mirthful, and is a long time coming, at that. I can detect none of it, certainly, in this challenge written to a lady who, all during the preceding June, had sworn she loved him:

> Return, return the unvalued wealth
> I gave! Which scarcely profits you—
> The heart's lost youth—the soul's lost health—
> In vain! . . . false friend, adieu! [87]

It would be unjust to say, however, that he never had a frolicsome moment; the verses "On My Twenty-fourth Year," which would have been whimsical at any other time, are for this period almost hilarious:

> A man should do more
> With his twenty-fourth year
> Than mourn for a woman, because she's unkind,
> Or pine for a woman, because she is fair.
> Ah, I loved you Neræa! But now . . . never mind,
> 'Tis my twenty-fourth year!

[87] "Want."

Swinburne is much more philosophical than most of the Victorians, and will not allow his existence to be blighted, or left without a germ for the flower, by the mere defection or hard-heartedness of a mistress. "Let us go hence, my songs, she will not hear," [88] says he, and betakes himself, with something of a shrug, to pastures new. When Felise would have him submit wholly to her domination, he declines firmly:

> My heart will never ache or break
> For your heart's sake.[89]

Readers of Tennyson, when they come to "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," are apt to be so dazzled by his comparative evaluation of kind hearts and coronets, of simple faith and Norman blood, that they will fail to recognize the poem as a lover's revolt. Tennyson assures us that it was written very early, and that it is "a dramatic poem drawn from no particular character." [90] But even though the moral purpose is uppermost, the supposed hero has obviously been more deeply interested in Lady Clara than he cares to admit; otherwise he would not have written seventy-two lines to let her know that of him she would not gain renown. Even the daughter of a hundred earls may prove temporarily attractive to a country lad, and he must have passed through a tenderer stage before he saw the snare and retired, before he could say:

> You sought to prove how I could love,
> And to disdain is my reply.
> The lion on your old stone gates
> Is not more cold to you than I.

[88] "A Leave-Taking."
[89] "Felise."
[90] *Works*, ed. Hallam Tennyson, N. Y., 1908 (1st ed. 1893), p. 698.

Charles Mackay's principal objection to his Mary is that she has smiles for all the world, rather than for him alone. Not because of any trace of poetic merit, but because the sentiment is so thoroughly Victorian, I quote part of his song:

> In thy track I'll cease to run,
> I will end as I begun;
> She whom I would choose for life,
> For my love, my friend, my wife,
> Must have heart—and thou hast none,
> Mary, Mary! [91]

Meredith's *Modern Love,* of course, records the progress of a misunderstanding between husband and wife,—from the husband's point of view. Only once or twice, however, does the writer break out in open revolt. Sonnet XIV might be construed as a definite secession:

> I open an old book, and there I find
> That "Women still may love whom they deceive."
> Such love I prize not, madam: by your leave,
> The game you play at is not to my mind.

Sonnet XXIV depicts an inward struggle, wherein, after almost giving way to his desire, he bolsters up his resolution once more, and declares:

> Never! though I die thirsting. Go thy ways!

These widely scattered, mostly negligible poems must nevertheless have been paving the way for a new era, for the nineteenth century was to produce one rebel document with a scope as imposing as that of Watson's *Hekatompa-*

[91] "Mary."

thia, though poetically far superior to the earlier work. In 1881, just one year less than three centuries after the publication of the *Hekatompathia,* there appeared Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's *Love-Sonnets of Proteus,* in which, to live up to the title, the author had to rebel frequently whether he liked it or not. Sometimes, to tell truth, his heart seems not to be in it. In the fifteen sonnets headed "Farewell to Juliet," for example, though he starts out boldly enough:

> Juliet, farewell, I would not be forgiven
> Even if I forgive. . . .
> Hell
> Has no more fixed and absolute decree.
> And heaven and hell may meet, but never we.[92]

or again:

> We vex each other with our presence. . . .
> Nay, go your ways, I will not vex you more.[93]

yet a gradual weakening sets in somewhere in the third or fourth sonnet of the group, and after a while one cannot tell for certain whether the man is dismissing his mistress or asking to be restored to favor. In the end, Blunt goes on his way, though by no means rejoicing. Juliet is not the only one who is sacrificed to maintain the Protean character of the book; here, for example, is a sonnet addressed "To One Whom He Had Loved Too Long":

> Why do I cling to thee, sad love? Too long
> Thou bringest me neither pleasure to my soul
> Nor profit to my reason save in song.
> . . . . . .

[92] Sonnet XXXIV.
[93] Sonnet XXXVII.

Love long has left the feast; the cup is spilt.
Let us go too.[94]

The note of satiety, already heard in *Proteus*, is sounded again by Symons and Dowson, each in his characteristic tone. Dowson, melancholy, tired, but never maudlin, gives over his love:

Love's aftermath! I think the time is now
That we must gather in, alone, apart,
The saddest of all the crops that grow,
Love's aftermath.

. . . . . .

Thy kisses chill my heart,
Our lips are cold; averted eyes avow
The twilight of poor love:
We can but part,
Dumbly and sadly, reaping as we sow,
Love's aftermath.[95]

When Arthur Symons pauses to ring out the old love and ring in the new, on the other hand, he cannot refrain from a groan or a swagger. For example:

Good to be loved and to love for a little, and then
  Well to forget, be forgotten, ere loving grow life.
Dear, you have loved me, but was I the man among men?
  Sweet, I have loved you, but scarcely as mistress or wife.

. . . . . .

Well, but tomorrow? Tomorrow, good-bye: it is over.
  Scarcely with tears shall we part, with a smile who had met.
Tears? What is this? But I thought we were playing at lover.
  Play-time is past. I am going. And you—love me yet? [96]

[94] Sonnet LXXVI.
[95] "Beyond."
[96] "Love in Spring." By permission of William Heinemann, Ltd.

It is typical of Symons that the lady—or, even more correctly, the ladies—should continue to love him after he, with a word of polite surprise at the extraordinary fascination of the man Arthur Symons for the opposite sex in general, should pass on to pluck the next flower. Some of his other "lachrymose pretensions to promiscuity" [97] are written in the same spirit, and even the least egotistical of his rebellions has its source in his pride, which will not let him accept half-measures:

> And I would have, now love is over,
> An end to all, an end:
> I cannot, having been your lover,
> Stoop to become your friend! [98]

Lionel Johnson is just as grave, but he seems to enjoy a somewhat less narrow view; at least, he is not encumbered by cast-off mistresses unable to stifle their affection for him. "Love's Ways" shows a break on both sides:

> You were not cruel always! Nay,
> When I said *Come!* one year ago:
> Could you have lingered by the way?
> Did not the very wind seem slow?
>
> Then, had you tarried, I had known
> Nor love's delight, nor lost love's pain:
> Then had I always lived alone.
> Now, you need never come again.[99]

Herbert Trench, posing as a Venetian cavalier of the sixteenth century, sings a "Bitter Serenade" to the lady

[97] I borrow this phrase from Rebecca West, in *The Bookman,* Aug., 1930, p. 518.
[98] "After Love."
[99] By permission of the Macmillan Company.

who has beguiled him. Like the English cavalier in a ballad quoted above, he flies to war and arms:

> You hold the love I bear you a thing common.
> Enough. So let it die.
> . . . . . .
> My hand forgets the strings. May be for travel
> It trembles to be gone, to steer the fleet!
> There's the secret of the Indies to unravel,
> And then the Turks to beat! [100]

The ending reminds one of an old broadside ballad, supposed to be sung by a sailor—a very unusual kind of sailor—who departs from his mistress because of her inconstancy, declaring:

> I'd rather be where bullets fly,
> Than in a woman's company.[101]

The end of the century brought in some rebellions of a less morbid nature, together with the usual run of serious ones. In the large and scattered group of examples from the poetry of the last three decades, it is almost impossible to detect any one dominant tone, or favorite idea, since the breaking-down of the old restrictions limiting the scope of poetry has furnished rebellious lovers with much new material. Austin Dobson even brings in the case of a young lady to whom he (in the poem) rented a vacant house, and to whom he became attached more warmly than was necessary for the transaction of business. When

[100] By permission of Jonathan Cape, Ltd.

[101] "The Seaman's Complaint for his Unkind Mistress, of Wapping," *Roxburghe Ballads*, VIII, 433.

she left unexpectedly, however, he had little difficulty in consoling himself:

> I sit down, sad—not daunted,
> And, in my weeds, begin
> A new card—'Tenant Wanted,
> Particulars Within.' [102]

Some of the egotists of thirty years ago hold their own quite satisfactorily against those overbearing Cavaliers of former times. A. Lindsay Gordon, with charming self-assurance, makes the following proposition in "A Valentine":

> Let's quarrel once for all, my sweet,
> Forget the past—and then
> I'll kiss each pretty girl I meet,
> While you flirt with the men.

Richard Le Gallienne advances a theory that sounds somewhat startling in this day of equal suffrage:

> Man is too much a god
> To worship even a woman utterly:
> This let one woman learn and one man teach.
> A man is woman and a man besides,
> A woman only woman.[103]

It matches ill, however, with the same poet's attitude in "Sorcery"—where he wins a moral victory only by taking ignominiously to his heels:

> I dare not hear you sing,
> Dance not for me.
> . . . . .

[102] "Ad Rosam."
[103] "I Love her Love No More," from *New Poems*, 1910.

The Rebellious Lover

I must not be beguiled,
With the honied tune:
Yet O to lay my head
Twixt moon and moon!
'Twas so my sad heart said,
Only last June.[104]

Owen Seaman's "Women I Have Never Married" [105] presents an inimitable quintet of erstwhile loves—Priscilla, Dora, Emmeline, Joan, and Grace—from whom the author heartily rejoices to have escaped. There is a special reason in each case. Emmeline, for example, turned out to be too ethereal, too truly a "phantom of delight." Dora seemed a perfect creature for a while, as real as anyone could wish, but something shattered the illusion so completely that her lover, who once thought she was worth ten score of him, now counts her scarce his equal. But Priscilla is undoubtedly the gem of the lot, and I regret that I have not permission to quote at least a part of the priceless treatment she receives.

Harold Monro uses the plain terms, to say nothing of the gestures, of the Cavaliers:

I despise you—you are such
As hath never known desire.

And one day I shall arise,
Take my hat and swing it low,
Laugh in your astonished eyes,
Quietly shut the door, and go.[106]

[104] From *A Jongleur Strayed*, 1922. By courtesy of Doubleday, Doran and Company.
[105] From *Salvage*, 1909.
[106] "Impressions, XVI," from *Before Dawn*, 1911. By permission of Constable and Company, Ltd.

Most of the above poems leave no room for doubt as to the writer's feelings toward his mistress, but in many modern works it becomes increasingly difficult to make sure whether he really breaks away at all, and, if so, to what specific class of revolt the poem belongs. This can be noticed, to a certain extent, even in Dowson and Johnson. The use of symbolism and indirection sometimes leaves the reader with nothing but the title to tell him what stand the author finally takes. In Richard Le Gallienne's "Love's Landmarks," for example, everything seems to point toward a declaration of independence, but the evidence, at best, is only circumstantial:

> The woods we used to walk, my love,
> Are woods no more.
> . . . . . .
> But ah! what if they fill or fell
> Each pond, each tree,
> What matters it today, my love,
> To me—to thee? [107]

This gives us the author's reaction to the *scene* of his former happiness, and only by implication his view of the love-affair itself. A very similar picture and mood are found in Thomas Hardy's "Neutral Tones," which tells how the two of them stood by a pond one day, and how the memory of that scene haunts the changed lovers:

> Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
> And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
> Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
> And a pond edged with grayish leaves.[108]

[107] From *Robert Louis Stevenson, an Elegy, and Other Poems*, 1895.
[108] By permission of the Macmillan Company.

Hardy treats a similar theme in "Her Initials":

> Upon a poet's page I wrote
> Of old two letters of her name;
> Part seemed she of the effulgent thought
> Whence that high singer's rapture came.
> —When now I turn the leaf the same
> Immortal light illumes the lay,
> But from the letters of her name
> The radiance has waned away.[109]

Whether these represent the true rebel spirit or not is for the reader to decide; the only certainty is that they commemorate the passing of love-affairs.

A. E. Housman's attitude toward a past infatuation is less vague:

> Oh, when I was in love with you,
> Then I was clean and brave,
> And miles around the wonder grew
> How well I did behave.
>
> And now the fancy passes by,
> And nothing will remain,
> And miles around they'll say that I
> Am quite myself again.[110]

D. H. Lawrence's *Look! We Have Come Through,* like the old sonnet-sequences, records the relations between the poet and his mistress over a considerable period of time; according to the Argument, "the conflict of love and hate goes on between the man and the woman, and between these two and the world around them, till it reaches some

[109] By permission of the Macmillan Company.
[110] *A Shropshire Lad,* xviii. By permission of Dodd, Mead and Company.

sort of conclusion." Though it has many gloomy spots, the poet only once grows vicious:

I am quite indifferent
  To your dubious state,
As to whether you've found a fortune
  In me, or a flea-bitten fate.

Make a good investigation
  Of all that is there,
And then if it's worth it, be grateful—
  If not then despair.

If despair be our portion
  Then let us despair.
Let us make for the weeping willow.
  I don't care.[111]

Even here, though, one might question whether the prevailing note were merely one of despair, or of despair mingled with rebellion.

John Drinkwater joins Herbert Trench and the rest of that small company of dissatisfied lovers who are off to drown recollection in a sea of adventures, travels, battles, or whatever they may chance to find. Drinkwater, perhaps unconsciously, seems to hint at a polar expedition in the last line of "Sir Eglamour's Farewell":

Because you bid me go, and set aside
  All that our love had been,
The praise, the dedication of a bride,
  The kingdom of a queen—
I go, too proud to question. But I'll wear

[111] "Loggerheads." By permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

No favor riding forth—
All words of poor compassioning forbear—
Enough! I know my north.[112]

When Rupert Brooke joins the caravan of outward-bound lovers, he chooses a far more practical destination:

Oh, I've loved you faithfully and well,
Three years, or a bit less.
It wasn't a success.

Thank God, that's done! and I'll take the road,
Quit of my youth and you,
The Roman road to Wendover
By Tring and Lilley Hoo,
As a free man may do.[113]

Brooke said in a letter that he preferred friendship to love: "It is cleaner than love, and older . . . I will not love, and I will not be loved." [114] Perhaps he arrived at this conclusion after some experiments; in his poems, at any rate, he waves away several mistresses, for no other reason than that "it wasn't a success." In a sonnet explaining his reaction to love, he calls himself one of those "wanderers in the middle mist,"

Who cry for shadows, clutch, and cannot tell
Whether they love at all, or, loving, whom:
. . . . . .
Pleasure's not theirs, nor pain. They doubt, and sigh,
And do not love at all. Of these am I.[115]

[112] From *New Poems*, 1925. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.
[113] "The Chilterns," from *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, copyright, 1915, by Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.
[114] E. Marsh, *Rupert Brooke*, N. Y., 1918, pp. 119–20.
[115] "I Said I Splendidly Loved You; It's Not True."

Again, he tells how he watched "the pines against the white north sky," and how

> There was peace in them; and I
> Was happy, and forgot to play the lover.[116]

Altogether, I see no reason why we should not accept his own avowal that he could not love deeply but often played the lover; for his only violent revolt against a mistress is based on a grievance too trivial to have turned a real love to hatred. One day in the forest he was indulging in a delicious reverie, which his inamorata disturbed with drab conversation; he takes this fully as hard as Wyatt took inconstancy:

> You came and quacked beside me in the wood.
> You said, "The view from here is very good!"
> You said, "It's nice to be alone a bit!"
> And, "how the days are drawing out!" you said.
> You said, "The sunset's pretty, isn't it?"
> . . . . . .
> By God! I wish—I wish that you were dead! [117]

Charles Dalmon sings, much more euphemistically, that he no longer cares for his stony-hearted mistress:

> I'll go no more on fancy flights
> To sing of her and her delights.
> . . . . . .
> And all of her that seemed so fair—
> Her hands, her lips, her cheeks, her hair—
> Are things I do not wish to own,
> Because her heart is turned to stone.[118]

116 "Pine-Trees and the Sky: Evening."
117 "The Voice."
118 "She No Longer Loves Him." By permission of Constable and Company, Ltd.

As in the preceding chapter, the list ends with some vivacious contributions by a few of the Irish poets, to whom we owe no little debt for enabling us to stop on a comparatively cheerful note. Padraic Colum makes an unsuccessful attempt to catch the style, as well as the spirit, of the Cavaliers:

> Shall I go bound and you go free,
> And love one so removed from me?
> Not so, the falcon o'er my brow
> Hath better quest, I dare avow!

L. A. G. Strong, when all other measures have failed, achieves his independence by mounting an "upland span," from which he looks out over the country toward the spot that interests him most:

> There, townwards, to the south
> A woman lies
> Whose urgent beauty can forbid my sleep,
> Her quiet mouth,
> Her eyes,
> All she denies:
> Yet this high moonlit slope
> And sweep of cloud
> Have hushed away
> The heart-destroying hope,
> The breathless prize,
> And left me cold to her, as if she lay
> Wrapt in her shroud.[119]

Finally James Stephens rebels in divers fashions. Under the assumed personality of Geoffrey Keating, he returns to the theme of old age, which was so popular in the farewells to

[119] "Upland Wisdom."

love, but which crops out only occasionally—in Landor, for example—as an excuse for a personal revolt:

O woman full of wiliness!
  Although for love of me you pine,
Withhold your hand adventurous,
  It holdeth nothing holding mine.

Look on my head, how it is gray!
  My body's weakness doth appear;
My blood is chill and thin; my day
  Is done, and there is nothing here.[120]

Then there is the solemn abjuration of "Nancy Walsh":

I, without bite or sup,
If thou wert fated for me,
I would go up
And would go after thee
Through mountains!

A thousand thanks from me
To God have gone,
Because I did not lose my senses to thee,
Though it was hardly I escaped from thee,
O Ringleted One!

Last, in youthfully robust and earthy terms, he vents his spite upon a girl whom he has just wooed unsuccessfully:

You'll go—then listen—you are just a pig,
  A little wrinkled pig out of a sty;
Your legs are crooked and your nose is big;
  You've got no calves; you've got a silly eye;
  I don't know why I stopped and talked to you;
  I hope you'll die.[121]

[120] "Geoffrey Keating." By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.
[121] "The Soothcrer." This and "Nancy Walsh" are also quoted by permission of the Macmillan Company.

In contrast to the throng of lovers who have sung themselves free from a lady's bonds, there are only a very few who have advised others to do likewise in individual cases. Perhaps they felt that it was meddling just a little too far in a man's affairs to bid him break away from such and such a mistress. On matters of principle, as we have seen, and shall see, they preached and exhorted freely enough; they enjoyed advising him to leave off love entirely, and they did not hesitate to lay down rules for his guidance even in individual affairs—as, to tell him that *if* his mistress would not love, he should lose no time but leave her. Yet a certain delicacy seems to have checked them from saying unreservedly, "The Devil take her!"

That is, it checked all but a few. Turberville, for instance, did not scruple to point out a course of action "To His Friend T.," who was losing sleep over "a Gentlewoman that Forced him Naught at All." Turberville speaks as one who knows:

> I counsel thus that may thee best advise,
> For that myself did serve a cruel Dame.
> The blind recur'd can judge of bleared eyes,
> The crippled heal'd, knows how to heal the lame.
> Shake thou betimes the yoke from off thy neck,
> For fear the print thereof remain behind:
> A happy man is he that fears no check,
> But lives at freedom with contented mind.

Occasionally such advice was given under the cover of anonymity. Someone in *Tottel's Miscellany* issued this "Comfort to the Complaint of Thestilis":

> Thestilis, thou silly man, why dost thou so complain?
> If needs thy love will thee forsake, thy mourning is in vain.
> . . . . . .

Thestilis, draw to the town and love as thou hast done.
In time thou knowest by faithful love as good as she is won.
And leave the desert woods and wailing thus alone,
And seek to salve thy sore elsewhere, if all her love be gone.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to remark that the *if*'s in this piece are equivalent to *since,* and refer to an accomplished fact rather than to a possible development. An anonymous singer in Martin Pearson's *Private Music* minces no words:

Love her no more, herself she doth not love:
. . . . . .
Alas, she will undo thee,
Her love is fatal to thee:
Curse her then and go!

Akenside, writing at a time when one needed a much more serious grievance than obduracy to excuse a revolt from one's lady, ventured to encourage "A Friend, Unsuccessful in Love." The friend's lack of success, however, was due not to the lady's mere unresponsiveness, but to her sudden preference for a "hoary churl" with a larger share of worldly gear than that possessed by the lover. Such women, says Akenside, are not even worth fretting about:

Cease then to gaze with looks of love:
Bid her adieu, the venal fair:
Unworthy she your bliss to prove;
Then wherefore should she prove your care?

One William Upton, a generation later, wishes that his friend "J.R." might spend his time more profitably than in weeping over a faithless mistress, since she too belongs to a worthless class:

Forbear, kind Sir, forbid your tears to flow;
Since Delia's false, she is not worth a tear:
Quench the fierce flame, forget it e'er did glow
With ardent love—thy breast is too sincere.[122]

Of the more recent poets I have found only one or two who took the time or the trouble to argue a friend out of amorous bondage. Charles Dalmon effected a cure upon a forlorn lover by inducing him to drain a pot of cider:

I bade him, "Now forget her,
And drown your misery;"
And when his pot was emptied,
His face was good to see.
He shouted, "I shall live, shall live!"
He shouted, "I shall live!" [123]

William Sharp (Fiona Macleod), to be sure, offers some counsel, but it can scarcely have conveyed much comfort to the person for whom it was intended, for the poet merely advises him to drown himself "beneath the sterile kiss of the engulfing wave" in preference to wooing a certain lady with a "deep dark heart." [124] It reminds one of the epigram from the *Greek Anthology* which Dr. Sayers translated thus:

Hunger perhaps may cure your love,
Or time your passion greatly alter:
If both should unsuccessful prove,
I strongly recommend a halter.

[122] "To J. R."
[123] "The Forlorn Lover," from *Song Favours*, 1895. By permission of John Lane, The Bodley Head, Ltd.
[124] "In the Shadow."

CHAPTER FOUR

Equal Rights

SIR," declares the gallant Captain McIntyre in Scott's *Antiquary,* "you would not have me desperately in love with a woman that does not care about me?" [1] And Scott's motto-verse for the chapter, taken as usual from that hypothetical "Old Play," catches the spirit of the situation and puts it in other words:

> Nay, if she love me not, I care not for her;
> Shall I look pale because the maiden blooms?

This strikes the keynote admirably for the type of lover's revolt with which we have to do in this chapter.

Every lover who forsakes his lady for no other reason than that she will not grant his suit subscribes automatically, of course, to the doctrine:

> If she think not well of me,
> What care I how fair she be?

But even though he did not act upon it, this principle would still be in flat contradiction to one of the major articles of the code, which states conclusively that no amount of faithful service entitles a lover to demand, or even to expect compensation. The service is its own re-

[1] *The Antiquary,* Chap. XLIV.

ward, and if, by rare good fortune, the lover chance to please his mistress so well that she accepts him along with the service, he should thank his stars for bestowing on him an entirely unmerited bliss.

Since, by a not unduly strict interpretation of the code, a mere declaration of lovers' rights may be considered an act of *lèse majesté,* then the tender of an ultimatum demanding recompense on pain of instant abandonment constitutes a full-fledged revolt, differing only in point of time from Suckling's

> "March, march!" quoth I, "The word straight give,
> Let's lose no time, but leave her."

or Lovelace's

> That frown, Aminta, now hath drown'd
> Thy bright front's pow'r and crown'd
> Me that was bound.

or Cunningham's

> No longer, Daphne, I admire
> The graces in thine eyes;
> Continued coldness kills desire,
> And famish'd passion dies.

These men all followed the policy of equal rights to its logical conclusion when they found their Amintas and their Daphnes ungrateful; and it is reasonable to assume that those who have been bold enough to demand unconditional surrender would, if their terms had not been accepted, have turned rebel outright. The seditious intention was there, and the fact that Chloe or Neæra capitulated

does not soften it, any more than the submission of a small country to the ultimatum of a large country vindicates the latter's bellicose attitude.

With amorous ultimatums, then—whether addressed to one lady in particular or broadcast for the benefit of

> That not impossible She
> That shall command my heart and me—

this chapter will deal as the preceding chapters have dealt with cases of open revolt. An independent, impatient lot, as might be expected, are the writers of these demands for recompense. From the very nature of the case, they never indulge in smoky sighs and bitter tears; seldom, even, do they allow any great solemnity to creep into their tones, for they must give the impression either that love itself is a matter of considerable indifference to them, or that whole legions of damsels, fain to console unappreciated lovers, pine for them elsewhere. The necessity for maintaining one or the other of these attitudes debars not only the groaning type of rebellion, but the heroico-tragical display of stoicism that appealed to nineteenth-century taste. Lest we forget how much this means, it is well to recall one or two of the things we shall be spared:

> Though I starve, and to my death still mourn
> And piecemeal in pieces though I be torn;
> And though I die, yielding my wearied ghost,
> Shall never thing again make me return.

> And . . . well, I have not blown out my brains.
> You see I can laugh. That is all.

The case for equality of obligation has been stated more poetically, but never more clearly than by Alexander Scott, who seems also to have been the first to propound this doctrine on his own responsibility in English verse. "To luve unluvit it is ane pane," quoth Scott, on an occasion which enabled him to speak from first-hand knowledge—namely, when his wife left him. Then, like Hamlet, Scott begins to call himself names:

> Quhattane ane glaikite fule am I,
> To slay my self with melancholy.

Unlike Hamlet, though, he really goads himself to the point of action:

> My hairt, sen thow may nocht hir pleiss,
> Adew, as gude lufe cumis as gaiss.

Here, to be sure, we have an actual severance of relations before the poem is over, but the dictum, "as gude lufe cumis as gaiss," is interesting in connection with the principle that underlies most of these ultimatums—particularly as Scott saw fit, elsewhere, to carry it a step further:

> Als gud luve cumis as gais,
> Or rathir bettir.[2]

For a detailed exposition of his stand, we could hardly find anything more thorough than the following:

> Thair is nocht ane winche that I se
> Sall win ane wantage of me;
> Be scho fals, I sal be sle,
> And say to dispyt hir;

[2] "In June the Jem of Joy."

Be scho trew, I will confyd,
Will scho remane, I sall abyd;
Will scho slip, I will bot slyd,
And so sall I quyt her.

George Turberville also knows whereof he speaks—if we are to believe the title—when "He Sorrows Other to Have the Fruits of his Service." After wondering, in abominable poetry, why rewards are not more justly apportioned in this world, he screws up his courage to the point of declaring:

Hereafter I intend
To fawn on them that force on me,
And bow when other bend.

If concrete illustration carries any weight, then credit for the most important enunciation of the equal-rights principle must go to Samuel Daniel, who, lawyer-fashion, proposes a test case as follows: "The Passion of a distressed man, who being in a tempest on the Sea, and having in his Boat two Women, of whom, he loved the one that disdained him, and scorned the other who affected him, was by commandment from Neptune, to cast out one of them, to appease the rage of the tempest, but which, was referred to his own choice." The delicacy of this situation might well distress a man, and Daniel runs a great risk of having his boat swamped while he still wavers betwixt "My unkind Love, or she that loves me dear"—yet he decides, in the end, that the former must go overboard:

Her disdain her true reward must have;
She must be cast away that would not save.

It is irrelevant to inquire how such an awkwardly arranged trio happened to be out in a small boat together, and it is not to be supposed that Daniel actually resorted to this emphatic way of showing that he sympathized with Scott and Turberville, or even that he himself set forth this hypothetical problem merely to illustrate his views. The case was put to him by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford. The verdict, however, Daniel gives on his own responsibility, as he tells us: "I must judge of this case . . . as my self do stand looking through the prospective of mine own imagination, that only takes measure of other men's passions by that itself feels."

The Elizabethan sonnet-sequences, strictly speaking, contain no ultimatums unaccompanied by actual revolt, though in nearly all of the cases of sedition within the sequences, the poet, by implication, upholds the theory that his service entitles him to a reward. Included in Lord Brooke's *Cælica,* however, is a poem written long before the publication of the sonnets as a group, and addressed, not to Cælica, but to "His Cynthia"; this poem first stigmatizes both the "self-loving lads, whom Cupid's arrow never glads," and the "poor souls that sigh and weep, in love of them that lie and sleep,"—then it goes on to tell Cynthia that the author represents a happy medium:

> Sweet nymph, 'tis true, you worthy be,
> Yet without love, naught worth to me.[3]

Sonnet LXXIII of the series also contains a reasonably effective statement of the abstract principle of equal rights, apropos of some reminiscences of a former mistress, whom

[3] "Of his Cynthia."

the poet deserted because of her hard-heartedness. Calling upon physics for an analogy, he tells her:

> Nature and love no vacuum can endure.

Francis Davison, the editor of *A Poetical Rhapsody,* assures his mistress that if she likes and loves him still, then hers he is and will be ever, but when it comes to faithfulness, he is a gentleman of the old school:

> If that you love to range
> And oft to chop and change,
> Then get you some new-fangled mate.[4]

The relative scarcity of these ultimatums, up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, may possibly be due to the lack of a really worthy manifesto, embodying the basic principle in verses that could be, if not shouted from the housetops, at least sung to the most discerning listeners. Such a manifesto came, about 1617, in Wither's "Shall I, Wasting in Despair?" after which examples rapidly increased and multiplied. The poem, so familiar that it need not even be quoted here, inspired in its own day not only emulation, but patent imitation. Thus a writer, believed by some to have been Sir Walter Ralegh, began:

> Shall I, like an hermit, dwell
> On a rock, or in a cell?

and stated his point in decidedly infelicitous and commercial terms:

> If she undervalues me;
> What care I how fair she be?

[4] "Sweet, If You Like and Love Me Still."

Thomas Heywood introduced some coarseness into the thought, but successfully avoided banality in his expression:

> Though my Mistress seem in show,
> Whiter than the Pyrene snow:
> Though I fitly might compare her
> To the Lilies, or things rarer,
> Crystal, or to ice congeal'd,
> If those parts that lie conceal'd,
> Be others given and kept from me,
> What care I how fair she be?

Wither's original poem, with a few changes and some additions, appeared as a broadside ballad.[5] Even a madrigal by Thomas Nabbes, written a number of years later, echoes Wither sufficiently to be considered a possible imitation, though it is not so unmistakably a copy as are the others:

> What though with figures I should raise
> Above all heights my mistress' praise;
> Calling her cheek a blushing rose,
> The fairest June did e'er disclose?
> . . . . . .
> Too great hyperboles, unless
> She loves me, she is none of these.

Some other poems which seem to have come more or less indirectly from the same original source of inspiration are these:

> Tell me not of a face that's fair,
> Nor lip and cheek that's red,
> . . . . . .

[5] *The Pepys Ballads*, ed. H. E. Rollins, Cambridge [Mass.], 1929, I, 58.

But if that thou wilt have me love,
  And it must be a she,
The only argument can move
  Is that she will love me.

(Alexander Brome, "The Resolve")

I grant your eyes are much more bright
Than ever was unclouded light;

. . . . . .

Yet if you hate when I adore,
To do the like I find much more.
A voice would move all but a stone
Without kind love shall find me one;
And eyes the brightest ever shined
On me have power but as they're kind.

(John Bulteel)

Wert thou yet fairer than thou art

. . . . . .

Or hadst thou in thine eyes more darts,
Than ever Cupid cast at hearts;
Yet if they were not thrown at me,
I would not cast a thought on thee.

("Mr. W. M.")

I ne'er could any lustre see
In eyes that would not look on me.

. . . . . .

Must I, with attentive eye,
Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
I will do so, when I see
That heaving bosom sigh for me.

(Richard Brinsley Sheridan)

Returning to the early seventeenth century, we find other expressions of this doctrine, perhaps encouraged by

the impetus that Wither's verse gave, but not fashioned after its pattern. Charles Hammond, a ballad-writer, brings a message of good cheer to all "brave youngsters that live in the city," telling them:

I cannot love if not loved again.[6]

This forms the theme of several other broadsides, written in even poorer verse than most of their kind.

Sir Robert Aytoun, as we have already seen, had strong views on the subject of unrewarded love, and he expressed them unequivocally:

He that can love unloved again,
Hath better store of love than brain.[7]

To a haughty mistress he sends a demand for instant surrender, intimating that it makes no great difference to him whether she yields or not, so long as he knows how to regulate his own conduct:

Speak but the word, or do but cast
A look which seems to frown.
I'll give you all the love that's past,
The rest shall be mine own.[8]

Others besides Aytoun heartily disliked indecision, and ordered their mistress to "speak but the word," which would either accept them or release them. Says James Shirley:

Choose to love or deny,
I will not be so fond to die
A martyr to thy cruelty![9]

[6] "A Fairing for Young-Men."
[7] "To an Inconstant Mistress."
[8] "To a Haughty Mistress."
[9] "To his Mistress."

"If you love me, tell me," commands Herrick:

> For as I will not sell ye,
> So not one cross to buy thee
> I'll give, if thou deny me.[10]

In terms which smack less of the counting-house, he outlines his creed "To a Delaying Lady":

> If you desire
> My spark should glow,
> The peeping fire
> You must blow;
> Or I shall quickly grow,
> To Frost or Snow.

Lovelace, though he defined his position only by way of justifying an out-and-out desertion of his obdurate mistress, did nevertheless put the matter tersely and forcibly:

> Love's fiery darts,
> Till tipt with kisses, never kindle hearts.[11]

Applying this axiom to his own case, he would have Aminta know:

> I ne'er must die
> By any scorching, but a melting, eye.

Other Cavaliers added their voices to the growing demand for a return of affection, but they did not do it so well. Carew, for example, reflects no great credit upon his own poetical ability by his ultimatum to Phillis:

[10] "Nor Buying or Selling."
[11] "Courante Monsieur."

Think not your conquest to maintain
By rigour or unjust disdain;
In vain, fair nymph, in vain you strive,
For love doth seldom hope survive.[12]

The word *seldom,* while it leaves him a way of retreat, nevertheless weakens his stand a great deal.

James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, not only demands tokens of gratitude, but stipulates that he must reign absolute monarch over his mistress' heart, and not serve on a governing committee:

For if confusion have a part
(Which virtuous souls abhor),
And hold a synod in thine heart,
I'll never love thee more.[13]

It should be sufficiently evident from this that self-abasement was not one of the Marquis' outstanding qualities. He makes this more apparent in another poem, in which, generously classing himself as a noble soul, and assuming that every member of the female sex is a potential mistress for him, he sets down some precepts for them as a group:

Reciprocal your flowers must prove,
Or my ambition scorns to love.
A noble soul doth still abhor
To strike but where 'tis conqueror.[14]

Cowley demands an immediate answer from his mistress, for he hears the rushing of time at his back and be-

[12] "Ode."
[13] "I'll Never Love Thee More."
[14] "In Praise of Women."

grudges each hour that might be passed in the company of a more responsive damsel:

> For Heaven's sake, what d'ye mean to do?
> Keep me, or let me go, one of the two;
> Youth and warm hours let me not idly lose,
> The little time that Love does choose:
> If always here I must not stay,
> Let me be gone whilst yet 'tis day;
> Lest I, faint and benighted, lose my way.[15]

Whatever the Puritan régime during the Commonwealth may have accomplished of permanent value, it obviously did not bring about a decrease in the number of "delaying ladies" or in the boldness and independence of their suitors, for we find a copious array of ultimatums despatched to such ladies soon after the Restoration. The cavaliers of these days seem to have been acutely aware of the flight of time, and their mistresses were called upon to make some quick decisions. "Prithee, say aye or no," demands Shipman:

> I cannot stay,
> Nor wait upon
> A smile or frown.
> If thou wilt have me, say;
> Then I am thine, or else I am mine own.[16]

Flatman brusquely asks, in order that he may be up and doing:

> Prithee, confess, for my sake and your own;
> Am I the man or no? [17]

[15] "The Same" (follows "Resolved to Be Beloved").
[16] "The Resolute Courtier."
[17] "The Indifferent."

Sedley, in a burst of generosity altogether unusual for the time, concedes that a lady may have great difficulty in making up her mind on the spur of the moment, and he is willing to grant his mistress a reasonable period for deliberation—say, a week:

> If in a week I could prevail,
> Then I might happy be;
> But love and patience both will fail
> To wait eternally.[18]

A little later, in *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, someone is still urging his mistress to speak quickly:

> Either comply as you should,
> Or leave me to others that would.[19]

Alexander Brome is a "Wary Wooer," who will have recompense for his pains or know the reason why:

> Faith, you're mistaken, I'll not love
> That face that frowns on me.

"I can love, and love entirely," says Hannay, in an engagingly frank bit of self-analysis, but he finds that the wholeness of his passion depends to a surprisingly large degree upon the way in which it is received by the lady most concerned:

> Her love no sooner slaketh,
> But my fancy farewell taketh.

[18] "The Same Inverted" (follows a song pledging eternal love).
[19] "If My Addresses Are Grateful."

Whether or not Sir Aston Cokaine was much in the public eye, he himself never doubted that society in general took an active interest in the state of his amorous affairs, and it was with an eye to their opinion, therefore, that he shaped his course:

> I will not subject be to her disdain.
> The world shall never say I love in vain.[20]

Tom Durfey, after recalling the number of damsels he has pursued in vain—which he puts, vaguely, at "Some Thirty or Forty or Fifty at Least"—cannot find it in his heart to keep on trying unless he may have something more to show for his effort than has hitherto come his way:

> All my days I can pass with the kind, the kind,
> But I'll part with the proud in an hour.
> Then if you'll be good-natured and civil, and civil,
> You'll find I can be so too, so too;
> But if not you may go, you may go to the devil,
> Or the devil may come to you, to you.

No patient, disinterested service is to be expected from Durfey or the other lovers in *Pills to Purge Melancholy*—nor is it forthcoming. Many of them will exert themselves in behalf of a congenial dairymaid, but would not help Aphrodite over a stile if she seemed disinclined to repay them in kind. Be kind, says one to his mistress, and you will have me always at your feet,

> But by Jove if you chance to prove cruel,
> I'll get me a miss, that freely will kiss.[21]

[20] "I love a Lass as Fair as E'er Was Seen."
[21] "Come, Fair One, Be Kind."

Another regards his passion as a living thing, which must be nourished on a reciprocal emotion, and not merely on verbal expressions but on material proofs:

> My hungry Love in quiet
> Can't be with cordial drops;
> It wants substantial diet,
> And cannot feed on scraps.[22]

This figure, interestingly enough, was revived two centuries later by Wilfrid Blunt, who, writing as Proteus, remarks that his love too needs substantial diet:

> Youth cannot be
> For ever fed on these unnatural toys,
> And needs must murmur if it have not meat.[23]

The chorus of ultimatums and equal-rights propaganda, though it had never been stronger than it was from about 1660 to 1700, nevertheless began to thin out after the turn of the century, and, except for occasional voices crying out in the wilderness, there has never been a real revival of it. Its decadence during the first half of the eighteenth century may be seen both in a numerical decline and in a growing ineffectiveness of expression. "Shall I, Wasting in Despair?" seems to be the outgrowth of a process, the secret of which had been forgotten: even the imitations, as we have seen, showed a gradual weakening as more and more time intervened between them and the original.

A little, perhaps, of the old spirit was hovering in the air still when Matthew Prior addressed his Phillis, telling

[22] "Tho', Celia, Art You Show."
[23] *Love-Sonnets of Proteus*, XXII.

her to "give this humor over," and to bestow her kindness as a reasonable mistress should:

> I shall turn an arrant rover
> If the favor's still refused.[24]

Not enough of it, however, was left over to enlighten the verses of later men, who file their demands in plodding or in sing-song fashion without attempting any new conceits, or even improving on the old. George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, takes a mild pleasure in matching his pride with that of his mistress:

> If you're too proud to ease my pain,
> I am too proud for your disdain.[25]

Henry Baker's lack of inspiration shows only too plainly in verses like these:

> Fair tho' she be, if she my love disdains,
> My Heart shall break the bondage of her chains.[26]

Harry Carey, perhaps intoxicated by his success with "Sally in our Alley"—to say nothing of "God Save the King"—said that he would waste no time plucking flowers for a mistress unless she fulfilled her part of the bargain:

> If the nymph whom thus I love,
> To her fond swain should faithless prove,
> I'll seek some dismal distant shore,
> And never think of woman more.[27]

[24] "Phillis, Give this Humor Over."
[25] "On the Same" (follows a song to Clarinda).
[26] "The Resolution."
[27] "Love for Love's Sake."

Chatterton could well afford independence, since his mistresses, as we have already had occasion to note, owed their existence to the same process that produced the Rowley poems. He struts his little hour upon the stage, and gives us the following information about his manner of conducting love-affairs:

> I'm flattering, impudent and free,
> Unmov'd by frowns and low'ring eyes,
> 'Tis smiles I only seek and prize.[28]

George Stevens, on the other hand, states his principles in language the merest infant could understand and appreciate:

> If you are willing, I'm so too,
> If not—why there's no more to do.[29]

After this comes a break in the line, a break which Tom Moore tried valiantly to repair, but which he succeeded only in patching up temporarily. When he grew tired of serenading a damsel in affectionate anapests, he sometimes broke off abruptly and offered her a choice between going with him and going—the words are his own—"to Jericho." This mood sometimes came upon him when he remembered what a busy life he led, and resolved that there were better things for him to do than to pursue hopeless amours. Then he tells "Fanny Dearest," briefly and pointedly, that he has no time to waste upon her if she remains callous and obdurate:

> If sunshine cannot dissolve thy snow,
> I shall never attempt it with rain.

[28] "Say, Baker, If Experience Hoar."
[29] "Let Others Sing of Flames and Darts."

Dislike for the trouble involved in such affairs also plays a part in determining his attitude, and he states clearly the conditions—the only conditions—under which Love is worth while:

When Love is kind,
  Cheerful and free,
Love's sure to find
  Welcome from me.

But when Love brings
  Heartache or pang,
Tears, and such things—
  Love may go hang!

This is practically the last gasp of the equal-rights principle, stated for its own sake, though it does crop up again in at least one highly unexpected place. Something, surely, must have gone wrong when a respected and eminently respectable poet laureate, Alfred Austin by name, penned this ungallant line to his mistress:

If ends your love, why then my love must end.[30]

William Allingham apparently brings up the rear of the procession. He does not surprise us, for his Irish blood entitles him to a quantum of rebellious spirit. He has had his fill, it seems, of the Fabian policy as practised by one Kitty O'Hea—so he writes a song about it:

I never objected, in reason,
  To bear with a slight or a scoff,
But snow isn't always in season,
  And Lent isn't very far off.

[30] "Love's Fitfulness."

Shrove Tuesday's the time for to shake one,
And single I'll not pass the day,
Young, old, maid or widow, I'll take one—
So mind yourself, Kitty O'Hea! [31]

The beliefs revealed in this chapter do not lack missionaries—that is, devoted adherents who try to win converts either by persuasion or by shaming their friends into acceptance of the creed. When Chatterton, for example, defined his own stand, he was doing it ostensibly for the benefit of his friend Baker, who had emigrated to South Carolina, fallen in love with a Miss Hoyland there, and requested from Chatterton a supply of fervent appeals which he might pass upon her as his own. Chatterton sent the verses, and added the advice gratuitously, though from the little that is known of Baker, he was probably more "flattering, impudent, and free" than Chatterton could ever hope to be except in poetry.[32]

A very early example of such advice is an anonymous song from the fifteenth century, in which the author, like Chatterton, first states his own principles, and then counsels others not to pine away over a mistress unless she returns their passion:

If anay man stonde yn thys cas,
That fantaseys fall hys hert withyn,
Put hem awey wyl thu hast space,
Love not to sore I rede the be lynne.
As sone as ever sche do bygynne
For to turne hur hert the fro;
Truly I knowe no bettir gynne,
Then turne up hur halter and lat hur go.[33]

[31] "Kitty O'Hea."
[32] See C. E. Russell, *Thomas Chatterton*, N. Y., 1908, p. 92.
[33] "I Not What I Shall Syng nor Say."

For those who prefer a bird in the hand to a possible two still at large, he promises that

> As gode love wol come as go.

It will be remembered that Alexander Scott used almost the same words, and the refrain—"Turne up hur halter and lat hur go"—is not very different from the first line of an old Scottish popular song which Allan Ramsay and Robert Burns later adapted, and which Scott also may have known and echoed. Ramsay's version begins:

> O steer her up and haud her gawn,
> Her mither's at the mill, jo;
> But gin she winna take a man,
> E'en let her take her will, jo.

Burns' version begins, "O steer her up an' haud her gaun," and ends:

> Ne'er break your heart for ae rebuke,
> But think upon it still, jo,
> That gin the lassie winna do't,
> Ye'll find another will, jo.

Alexander Montgomerie, another Scot, made an effort to convince lovers of their folly in remaining faithful to an obdurate lady:

> Nane lovis bot fools vnlovd agane,
> Quha tyns thair tyme and comis no speid.[34]

Flatman advised others to follow his example, but wrapped up the counsel in those pompous generalities

[34] "A Description of Vane Lovers."

that unfortunately were becoming the mode in his time:

> If Woman cannot love, Man's folly's great
> Your Sex with so much zeal to treat.[35]

But an anonymous singer in *New Airs and Dialogues*, at about the same period, put the matter as bluntly as I have ever seen it expressed:

> 'Tis love with love should be repaid
> And equally on both sides laid;
> Love is a load a horse would kill
> If it do hang on one side still.[36]

These are all statements of doctrine meant for lovers everywhere, and as such are easier to write without offense than specific advice concerning an actual affair. The only reputable example of the latter is a reply sent by Byron to his friend J. M. B. Pigot, who complained of his mistress' cruelty. Byron advises:

> If still, from false pride, your pangs she deride,
> This whimsical virgin forget;
> Some other admire, who will melt with your fire,
> And laugh at your little coquette.[37]

The dangers of this sort of thing are well shown by the fact that Byron had to apologize in another set of verses to Mr. Pigot when he heard that the latter's "little coquette" had at last relented.[38]

[35] "The Indifferent."
[36] "When I a Lover Pale Do See."
[37] "Reply to Some Verses of J. M. B. Pigot."
[38] "To the Sighing Strephon."

CHAPTER FIVE

Against Women In General

A LESS pleasant theme, which comes in at this time [c.1250]," writes Mr. Erskine, "is the satiric song against women. Though it was a conventional motive on the continent, it does not seem to have made much impression on the English imagination; few examples of it remain." [1] This theme is indeed less pleasant than most of those we have been observing, but I am inclined to think that Mr. Erskine underestimates the hold which it took upon the English imagination. Few examples remain, to be sure, from the early period—perhaps because few existed, perhaps because some have been lost—but later it became almost a stock theme, never so popular as the farewell to love, or the personal revolt, but always a reliable topic for the poet to fall back on when he felt spleen running high or inspiration running low.

Now, anti-feminist literature, even if we confine our attention to verse, has certain aspects that do not concern us. Although the courtly love system bound its adherents to revere the female sex, and anyone who spoke ill of womankind was, as a fourteenth-century book of courtesy put it, "a chorle of chere," [2] it would obviously be an extension of our province to investigate adverse criticism of women from the religious, political, or educational

[1] J. Erskine, *The Elizabethan Lyric,* N. Y., 1903, p. 34.
[2] *The Boke of Curtasye,* ed. J. O. Halliwell for the Percy Society, 1841, p. 11.

point of view. What concerns us is the attack on women's title to the love and veneration of their gallants, the attempt to pluck women down from the pedestal on which courtly love theories had placed them. While any detraction might contribute to the lover's disillusionment, we are concerned specifically with strictures upon those qualities which (according to the poets) render the female sex unfit to be seriously loved. This does not include denunciations of *some* bad women—the existence of whom was tacitly admitted even by the best courtly lovers—nor does it include the friendly, would-be helpful suggestions which a distressingly large number of poets have seen fit to offer. Destructive criticism marks the rebel against the code of romantic love, and such is consequently the sort of criticism that we shall trace through English poetry.

The predominant complaint, of course, is "newfangleness," inconstancy, frailty—the name changes with the times, but men have been objecting to the same quality ever since Catullus wrote: *mulier cupido quod dicit amanti in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua*—and probably long before. Another unifying strain which runs through a great many of these attacks is the inductive method of reasoning. The syllogism of the discontented lover or of the constitutional misogynist runs more or less as follows: A. Chloris is false; B. Chloris is a woman; C. ergo, all women are false. In the early nineteenth century this would have been called Transcendentalism.

The sly distrust of woman that appears in a number of French romances probably came into English literature first through popular poetry. Although the tradition therefore was a foreign one, it was, as Mr. Padelford observes, "augmented by a native English contribution, for

the satire which gives evidence of the greatest antiquity of all is strongly alliterative, and observes the repetitions of early communal verse." [3] The verse to which he refers begins as follows:

> Herfor & therfor & therfor I came,
> And for to praysse this praty woman.
> Ther wer iii wylly, 3 wylly ther wer;
> A fox, a fryr, & a woman,
> Ther wer three angry, 3 angry ther wer;
> A wasp, a wesyll, and a woman.

One notable feature of these early disparagements of feminine character in English verse is a certain timidity; the writers resorted to various indirect methods in order to avoid a flat denunciation, as though the utterance of such sentiments were something of a felony—which it indeed was, according to the prevailing notions of gallantry. One anonymous writer, for instance, makes his point by affecting to praise women highly, and then ending each stanza with

Cuius contrarium verum est.[4]

Another anonymous poet evades responsibility for his dispraises most ingeniously:

> I wold say forther, and I derst,
> Of thys man ye wot wele wat;
> Of all metell I hold women the worst,
> But hyt was not I that told yow that.[5]

[3] *Cambridge History of English Literature,* II, 437.
[4] "For Tell a Woman All Your Cownsayle."
[5] "I Not What I Shall Syng nor Say."

Lydgate is the only one who comes out boldly with a denunciation of women for their lack of "stableness," without making his comments top-heavy with comparisons:

> Though al the world do his besy cure
> To make women stonde in stablenes,
> Hit may nat be, hit is agayn nature;
> . . . . . .
> In short to say, though al the erth so wan
> Were parchemyn smothe, whyte and scribable,
> And the gret see, cleped the occian,
> Were torned in inke, blakker then is sable,
> Ech stik a penne, ech man a scriveyn able,
> They coud nat wryte wommannes traitory;
> Bewar therfore; the blind et many a fly.[6]

These, with perhaps three or four others, are the only examples, in English verse before the sixteenth century, of libels against those feminine qualities in which a gallant would be interested. That there must have been a great many more is shown by the fact that people wrote *against* such libels—witness Hoccleve, who reproves all detractors of women, from Ovid down:

> Ouyde in his book callid Remedie
> Of loue greet repreef of wommen writith;
> Where-in I trowe he dide greet folie,
> And euery wight that in swich cas delitith;
> A clerkes custume is whan he endytith
> Of wommen, be it prose rym or vers,
> Seyn they be wikke al knowe he the reuers.[7]

[6] "Loke Wel Aboute, Ye that Lovers Be."
[7] *Minor Poems in the Ashburnam MS.*, ed. I. Gollancz, *EETS* ex. ser. 73, p. 26.

This would have been superfluous had there not been a considerable number of people who indited reproof of women in "prose rym or vers."

In the sixteenth century the diffidence which I have remarked in these early verses disappeared, and men seldom hesitated to tell their opinion of the opposite sex in straightforward, uncomplimentary language. Alexander Scott, taking it upon himself to be the Ovid of his day by giving advice on the remedy of love, said that it was essential to realize the true nature of women:

> For knew ye wemenis natur, course, and strynd,
> Ye wald nocht be so trew to thair untrewth
> Quhilkis hes no petie thocht your hairtis be pynd,
> Nor of your restless womenting no rewth.[8]

Wyatt made the usual generalization from his own experience, but his statement can hardly be considered a rebellious one, for he merely "Consoleth Himself with the Remembrance that all Women are by Nature Fickle." His colleague Surrey, however, takes a less submissive stand in issuing "A Warning to the Lover":

> I see (what would you more), stood never man so sure
> On woman's word, but wisdom would mistrust it to endure

Richard Hatfield, a contemporary of Wyatt and Surrey, wrote a satire on women, but apparently had not the courage of his convictions, for like the early writers he resorted to an old device to evade responsibility. In his case it was a question of reversing the meaning by misplacing the punctuation—compare the letter in *Ralph Roister*

[8] "The Slicht Remeid of Luve."

Doister, and the prologue to the performance of Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* in which the speaker "doth not stand upon points." Hatfield's verse, properly "pointed," reads thus:

> All women have virtues noble and excellent;
> Who can perceive that? They do offend
> Daily; they prove God with good intent
> Seldom; they displease their husbands to their lives' end
> Always, etc.

The chief claim of Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, to recognition even as a minor poet, rests upon a lyric in which he deplores the difference between women's outward seeming and their mental qualities:

> If women could be fair, and yet not fond,
> . . . . . .
> I would not marvel that they make men bond.
> . . . . . .
> But when I see how frail these creatures are,
> I muse that men forget themselves so far.

George Gascoigne, writing as "a lover disdainfully rejected contrary to former promise," concludes that his fate is nothing out of the ordinary, since

> Thou art as true as is the best
> That ever came of Cressid's line:
> For constant yet was never none
> But in unconstancy alone.[9]

Two of the sonneteers found that their mistresses, and

[9] "The Doal of Disdain."

hence all women, were creatures of deceit and irresolution. Barnabe Barnes manages to work in a compliment to his own sex while administering a reprimand to the other:

> Now as I find no thought to man's conceit;
> Then must I swear, to woman's no deceit! [10]

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, by a process of reasoning based on purely arbitrary premises, argues that "the devil himself loves not a half-fast mind"; therefore he (Lord Brooke) has no great liking for the mind of woman:

> And I
> Fear women that swear, nay; and know they lie.[11]

To Sir Philip Sidney is attributed what seems to be the earliest verse translation of Catullus LXX in English:

> A woman's words to a love that is eager,
> In wind or water's stream do require to be writ.[12]

But the author of *Alcilia* borrows the figure and expands it:

> Who seats his love upon a woman's will,
> And thinks thereon to build a happy state,
> Shall be deceiv'd, when least he thinks of ill,
> And rue his folly, when it is too late.
> He ploughs on sand, and sows upon the wind,
> That hopes for constant love in womankind.[13]

Most of these criticisms, I need scarcely point out, are comparatively mild. Now, whether their authors really

[10] *Parthenophil and Parthenope,* Elegy XVIII.
[11] *Cælica,* XXI.
[12] "Out of Catullus."
[13] *Alcilia,* XXVI.

felt less strongly on the subject than did certain others, or whether they restrained their feelings because their names were connected with the pieces, I cannot tell; but the fact remains that for real, uncompromising misogynism one must go to the anonymous contributions in the miscellanies and song-books. Beginning with *Tottel's Miscellany*, we find a sweeping recrimination "Against Women either Good or Bad":

A man may live thrice Nestor's life,
  Thrice wander out Ulysses' race:
Yet never find Ulysses' wife.
  Such change hath chanced in this case.
Less age will serve than Paris had,
  Small pain (if none be small enough)
To find good store of Helen's trade.
  Such sap the root doth yield the bough.
For one good wife Ulysses slew
  A worthy knot of gentle blood:
For one ill wife Greece overthrew
  The town of Troy. Sith bad and good
Bring mischief: Lord, let be thy will,
  To keep me free from either ill.

As in the poems of advice against love, a victim of "women's subtle lore" frequently sets himself up as a bad example to warn others; thus in *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* a lover descants on the faults of women, to the highly appropriate tune of "I Loathe that I Did Love":

Yet women do reward
  With care the loving wight.
They constancy no whit regard,
  In change is their delight.

You gallant youths therefore
In time beware by me;
Take heed of women's subtle lore,
Let me example be.[14]

Someone in *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights* issues "A Warning for Wooers, that they be not over hasty, nor deceived with women's beauty." He too sets himself up as a warning example, but obviously has misgivings about the consequences of expressing himself too frankly; after summoning the "loving worms" to "come learn of me," and counseling them, like his fellow-poet, to "take heed of women's subtle lore," he proceeds to damn the sex with the faintest praise ever bestowed:

Lay not the fault on woman's back;
Thousands were good,
But few scap'd drowning in Noah's flood;
Most are well bent;
I must say so, lest I be shent.

A "shepherd" in *A Passionate Pilgrim* weighs women in the balance with men, and finds the former wanting:

For now I see
Inconstancy
More in women than in men remain.[15]

The song-writers also evinced a touching anxiety to warn men against "Cressid's line." The first song in Robert Jones' *First Book of Songs and Airs* tells us that "A woman's looks Are barbed hooks," and that we should

[14] "The Lover Complaineth of his Lady's Unconstancy to the Tune of I Loathe that I Did Love."
[15] "My Flocks Feed Not," by Richard Barnfield.

The Rebellious Lover

Be more slow
In giving faith to speech,
Since women's words
No truth affords,
And when they kiss
They think by this
Us men to over-reach.

Another song in the same collection elaborates the matter more or less in the form of a catechism:

Women, what are they? Changing weathercocks
That smallest puffs of wind have power to turn.
. . . . . .
We men, what are we? Fools and idle boys
To spend our time in sporting with such toys.

The same willingness to give advice is evidenced by the author of one of the songs in Bateson's *Second Set of Madrigals:*

One woman scarce of twenty
But hath of tears great plenty;
. . . . . .
Yet all is but beguiling,
Their tears and else their smiling.
I'll therefore never trust them,
Since nature hath so cursed them
That they can weep in smiling,
Poor fools thereby beguiling.

In John Bartlet's *Airs* we are again warned to

Mark the subtle policies that female lovers find,
Who loves to fix their constancies like feathers in the wind.[16]

[16] "When from my Love I Looked for Love."

The ballad-writers found the stricture upon women a fertile, and apparently a popular field—a fact which confirms my opinion that it served as a substitute for inspiration, since the writers of these broadsides seldom even moistened their lips with a drop of Hippocrene except at second hand. Here is one on "The Fickleness of Women":

> Dust is lighter than a feather,
> And the wind more light than either;
> But a woman's fickle mind
> More light than feather, dust or wind.

Another writer generalizes in poor verse on his experience with a delaying lady:

> When I think on woman's fickleness,
> Love then I count as a toy.[17]

One, and only one, approaches an epigrammatic style in the dictum:

> These feminine creatures are absolute cheaters.[18]

The disparagement of women in verse—and serious disparagement, at that— was at its height during the first half of the seventeenth century. I cannot agree with Mr. Erskine when he says: "The song against women is almost at its last gasp in the so-called *Invective* [in Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody,* 1602]. The tradition of chivalry after Spenser and Sidney is too strong for the old theme, and the poet qualifies his criticism so as quite to take off the

[17] "Away! I Will Forsake her Company."
[18] "The Bachelor's Forecast."

edge." [19] The "Invective against Women," to which he refers, is another question-and-answer verse, and runs as follows:

> Are women fair? Aye, wondrous fair to see to,
> Are women sweet? Yea, passing sweet they be too;
> Most fair and sweet to them that inly love them,
> Chaste and discreet to all, save those that prove them.
> Are women wise? Not wise, but they be witty;
> Are women witty? Yea, the more the pity:
> They are so witty, and in wit so wily,
> That, be you ne'er so wise, they will beguile ye.

Perhaps some poets after Spenser and Sidney qualified their criticism so as to take off the edge, but Donne did not, nor did Cotton, nor did a host of minor writers. A great many of their verses, in fact, are much sharper than the one just given.

As a matter of fact, the fulminations against women had royal sanction, in the expressed opinions of King James I, who wrote a sonnet on the subject—a sonnet so bad that it may well have encouraged others to try their hand at the same sort of thing, if only to wipe out the disgrace from the name of English poetry. The royal sonnet began:

> O woman's wit that wavers with the wind,
> When none so well may wary now as I,
> A weathercock thy stableness I find,
> And as the sea that still can never lie.

If only Donne's "Go and Catch a Falling Star" were left as evidence, we could still say that the last gasp of the song against women was a fairly healthy inhalation. The

[19] *The Elizabethan Lyric*, p. 96.

edge, I believe, is not appreciably dulled in the closing lines:

> Though she were true when you met her,
> And last till you write your letter,
> Yet she
> Will be
> False, ere I come, to two or three.

Donne, according to Miss Foxwell, "ceases from his disfiguringly light judgments upon women when he has ceased from lightness himself, and sought graciousness in woman instead of allurement. Love for his wife brought out nobler qualities." [20] Perhaps it is cynical to suggest that he may only have grown tired of the subject, for he treated it thoroughly while he was about it. In "The Blossom" and "The Primrose" he makes many derogatory remarks about women in general. Perhaps a spirit of nonchalance does pervade "Woman's Constancy," beginning:

> Now thou hast loved me one whole day,
> Tomorrow when thou leav'st me, what wilt thou say?

But no lightness or tolerance appears in "Love's Alchemy," in which Donne is pessimistic in the extreme:

> Hope not for mind in women; at their best
> Sweetness and wit, they're but mummy, possest.

Turning to Charles Cotton, we find him lashing the sex vigorously, frankly generalizing from individual experiences:

> I was gull'd to think that you,
> Or any she, could long be true.
> . . . . . .

[20] *Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat,* ed. A. K. Foxwell, London, 1913, II, 23.

Oh Woman! Frailty is thy name,
Since she's untrue y'are all to blame,
And but in man no truth is found:
'Tis a fair sex, we all must love it,
But (on my conscience) could we prove it,
They all are false ev'n under ground.[21]

If it be considered that the third line from the last, in this poem, takes away the sting, we have still "The Joys of Marriage," in which Cotton, after describing two undesirable types of females, observes:

These are all extremes, I know,
But all Womankind is so,
And the golden mean to none
Of that cloven race is known;
Or to one if known it be,
Yet that one's unknown to me.

He has an air neither of insincerity nor of pleasantry when he exclaims:

Ah! where
In woman is a spotless mind? [22]

Nor, though he is imitating Horace, does he sound other than bitter in declaring:

Philosophers their pains may spare
Perpetual motion where to find;
If such a thing be anywhere,
'Tis, Woman, in thy fickle mind.[23]

[21] "Go, False One, Now I See the Cheat."
[22] "Ode to Chloe."
[23] "The False One."

Cotton at least admitted that there might be a woman who knew the golden mean, though he numbered none such among his acquaintance; and an earlier writer had said that thousands *were* good, but few escaped drowning in "Noah's flood." Rudyerd, an early seventeenth-century writer, expressed a very similar view:

> 'Tis strange, that since the date of Adam's fall,
> That God did make none good, and made so many;
> And if he did, for those I truly mourn,
> Because they died before that I was born.[24]

James Shirley, on the other hand, held that the golden mean was absolutely non-existent:

> All that are fair are false, and, if you find
> A middle essence here of woman kind,
> Party per pale they are, and curst to be
> Halting betwixt misshape and perjury.[25]

Phineas Fletcher and Sir Robert Aytoun wrote conventional poems on women's lightness, the former using the customary sand-and-water simile,[26] and the latter comparing woman's affections to the chance throw of the dice in the game of Irish.[27] Herrick finds women to be:

> Something made of thread and thrum;
> A mere botch of all and some.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> False in legs, and false in thighs,
> False in breast, teeth, hair, and eyes:

[24] "Why Do We Love These Things Which We Call Women?"
[25] "To a Beautiful Lady."
[26] "On Women's Lightness."
[27] "The Game of Irish."

False in head, and false enough;
Only true in shreds and stuff.[28]

Herrick, alone of all, does not stop at mere carping, but suggests that we get rid of women altogether. If his proposed substitute were a little more practical, who knows but that we might be a purely male race today:

What need we marry women when
Without their use we may have men?
And such as will in short time be
For murder fit, or mutiny;
As Cadmus once a new way found,
By throwing teeth into the ground;
From which poor seed, and rudely sown
Sprung up a warlike nation.
So let us iron, silver, gold,
Brass, lead, or tin, throw into th' mold;
And we shall see in little space
Rise up of men a fighting race.
If this can be, say then, what need
Have we of women or their seed? [29]

But Herrick's synthetic men did not prove popular, and the Cavaliers did not indulge in slighting remarks about women in general as extensively as we might expect them to have done. Their light attitude toward love-relations implied, of course, that they set no great value upon the female sex, but we have from them only two or three actual statements of adverse opinion. Suckling wrote:

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be cursed.

. . . . . .

[28] "Upon Some Women."
[29] "Women Useless."

You that have promised to yourselves
Propriety in love,
Know women's hearts like straws do move;
And what we call
Their sympathy, is but love to jet in general.

Lovelace translated Catullus LXX,[30] and Wither gave an estimate of women on his own account:

They are as false as fair,
Unconstant, frail, untrue.[31]

Wither bases his opinion, of course, on the fact that

Mine, alas, hath left me,
Falero, lero loo!

After the Restoration, except for Cotton's verses already cited, there is a great falling off in these songs against women. Although the theme still figures prominently in literature—in the drama, and in prose discussion—or perhaps for this very reason, few versifiers gave tongue to a real or feigned misogynism. Dryden translated Juvenal's Sixth Satire into heroic couplets, but said that he disagreed with the sentiments entirely. One of the songs in Dr. Wilson's *Cheerful Airs or Ballads* strikes up the old note somewhat feebly, telling us that

Who sails by woman's constancy,
Shipwrecks his love on every shore.[32]

A song in Henry Lawes' *Treasury of Music* recalls the "Go and Catch a Falling Star" of Donne:

[30] "Female Inconstancy."
[31] "I Loved a Lass, a Fair One."
[32] "Fondness of Man to Love a She."

Catch me a star that's falling from the sky,
Cause an immortal thing to die;
Stop with thy hand the current of the seas,
. . . . . .
Weigh me an ounce of flame, blow back the wind:
Then hast thou found faith in woman's mind.

Even *Pills to Purge Melancholy* answers but weakly to the call, and for once can furnish only a few ineffectual attacks, like:

'Tis very rare the wise and fair
To meet in woman-kind.[33]

Or this, which at least takes in the whole sex:

How cou'dst thou faith in Woman think?
Women are Sirens all.[34]

Philip Ayres reënforces the thin line with a vehement declaration colored by theology:

She may justly boast of what's eternal,
A heav'nly countenance, and a heart infernal.[35]

A mortal sickness, however, appears to have overtaken the enemies of women among the poets, so that the few voices crying out from this time on have each of them an opportunity to echo and die away before the next voice is heard. Henry Fielding translated and modernized a portion of Juvenal's Sixth Satire, and Edward Young wrote a series of satires which, presumably, were thought by the author to compare favorably with Juvenal's. As may well be im-

[33] "Phillis, When Your Ogling Eye."
[34] "Think, Wretched Mortal, Think No More."
[35] "An Epigram on Woman."

agined, the poet of the *Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* has not the Roman's trenchant tongue; the most violent statement to be found in his satire on women is as follows:

> Not to the glass alone are nymphs inclin'd,
> But every bolder vice of bold mankind.[36]

In view of the many poems in which a rejected lover "takes to the glass," it is perhaps not entirely superfluous to mention that Young is referring to mirrors, as the context proves beyond a doubt.

Burns makes a thrust or two at "Woman lovely, Woman fair." Once, at least, he pays his duty to the sand-and-water school:

> The billows on the ocean,
> The breezes idly roaming,
> The cloud's uncertain motion,
> They are but types of woman.[37]

In a severer attack—though hardly a tirade—provoked, naturally, by a single case in point, he reminds us of Ayres:

> O Woman lovely, Woman fair!
> An angel form's faun to thy share,
> 'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair—
> I mean an angel mind. [38]

William Cowper attacks the matter from what seems at first to be a new angle, but the verse turns out to be a translation from the Greek. He objects to the mercenary nature of women:

[36] Satire VI.
[37] "Deluded Swain, the Pleasure."
[38] "She's Fair and Fause."

Where wast thou born, Sosicrates, and where,
In what strange country can thy parents live,
Who seem'st, by thy complaints, not yet aware
That want's a crime no woman can forgive? [39]

James Hogg states frankly that he has lost his love, he disna ken how, and that he feels it will ease his mind somewhat if he rails against women everywhere:

A screed of ill-nature I canna weel help,
At having been guidit unfairly;
An' weel wad I like to gie women a skelp,
An' yerk their sweet haffits fu' yarely.
O! plague on the limmers, sae sly and demure,
As pawkie as deils wi' their smiling;
As fickle as winter, in sunshine and shower,
The hearts o' a' mankind beguiling.[40]

It seems hardly necessary to mention that Byron added his name to the list of poets who have declared that woman's vows are traced in sand. Although he said he "despised the sex too much to squabble with them," [41] he condescended once, at any rate, to anathematize them in bitter words:

Oh! well I know your subtle Sex,
Frail daughters of the wanton Eve—

. . . . . .

Oh! I should be a *baby* fool,
To sigh the dupe of female art—
Woman! perhaps thou hast a *Soul,*
But where have *Demons hid thy Heart?* [42]

[39] "On Female Inconstancy."
[40] "I Hae Lost my Love, an' I Dinna Ken How."
[41] *Letters and Journals*, ed. R. E. Prothero, London, 1898, I, 302.
[42] "To ——."

While Byron complained only once or twice, and in conventional language, his friend Tom Moore repeated the idea a half-dozen times, and with more originality. A marginal annotator who signed himself "W.W.," and who is supposed by some to have been William Wordsworth, holds that Moore borrowed some of his ideas from Suckling's "There Never Yet Was Woman Made." [43] While this is possible, yet these anti-feminist diatribes show so much family resemblance that almost any one of them may have inspired almost any other. Moore, like Wyatt, attempts a sort of stoicism, pretending to "console himself with the remembrance that all women are by nature fickle":

> And do I then wonder that Julia deceives me,
> When surely there's nothing in nature more common?
> She vows to be true, and while vowing she leaves me—
> And could I expect any more from a woman? [44]

Generally however, he finds it either impossible or impractical to restrain that tender melancholy which accounted in a large measure for his popularity. He sighs at the thought of female depravity:

> Ah! woman's faith is like her brightness,
> Fading as fast as rainbows, or day-flowers.[45]

Still, it helps him to emphasize a bit of botanical information:

> Like woman's love the rose will fade,
> But ah! not half so soon.[46]

Finally, he waxes bitter, and will not admit even a slight leavening of virtue in the lot:

[43] *Poems, Plays, and Other Remains of Sir John Suckling*, I, 19n.
[44] "Inconstancy."
[45] "Venetian Air."
[46] "Anacreontic."

Away, away—you're all the same,
A smiling, flutt'ring, jilting throng;
. . . . . .
Oh! blot me from the race of men,
Kind pitying Heaven, by death or worse,
If e'er I love such things again.[47]

The Victorians, as a whole, were not a misogynistic race, or if they were, they generally kept it to themselves. One could be a rebellious lover in a number of ways without denouncing the sex to which the ruler belonged. W. C. Bennett, to be sure, informs us that he trusts no woman more,[48] and Aubrey De Vere lumps them together under a most censorious heading:

The female race is all the same!
All variable, as the Poets tell us;
Mad through caprice—half-way 'twixt men and children.[49]

Meredith finds that "Women still may love whom they deceive," [50] but he is careful to find it in "an old book," and thus, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, avoid the appearance of advancing his own theories. Blunt tells his mistress that she is, after all, "but a woman," [51] and Richard Le Gallienne states (without proof) the theorem that

A man is woman and a man besides,
A woman only a woman.[52]

Robert Bridges has a little triolet on the perversity of women, but the daintiness of the form destroys any serious-

[47] "Woman."
[48] "Farewell."
[49] "Lycius."
[50] *Modern Love,* XIV.
[51] *Love-Sonnets of Proteus,* XXVI.
[52] "I Love her Love No More," from *New Poems,* 1910.

ness of tone that might lead us to place Bridges among the real woman-haters:

> All women born are so perverse
> No man need boast their love possessing.
> If nought seem better, nothing's worse:
> All women born are so perverse.
> From Adam's wife, that proved a curse
> Though God had made her for a blessing,
> All women born are so perverse
> No man need boast their love possessing.[53]

The only anti-feminist voice in recent times seems to be that of W. H. Davies, whose vehemence in "The Lost Sex," makes up, it must be admitted, for much of the apathy shown in the preceding century:

> Now, with that false deceitful sex,
> Henceforth I have for ever done;
> Only one Judas lived a man,
> But every woman is one.
>
> Send down, O Lord, ten thousand Christs,
> Each one as great as Christ thy son;
> Not for all men, but just to make
> One woman true, just one.[54]

In concluding this section I think a word should be said, lest the reader wonder how any of the poets quoted herein ever happened to take a mistress or wife, knowing the weakness, depravity, folly, etc., of women. Lest judgment should be hoodwinked by weight of numbers and appearance of harsh sincerity, and lest the honor and mental balance of

[53] In *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges*, 1914. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

[54] By permission of Jonathan Cape, Ltd.

the male sex should be suspected because of these cynical or peevish attacks, it is only fair to hint at the possibility of regarding them in another light. Campion observed—very sagely, I think—that in spite of all our carping,

> Yet do we wish, whate'er befall,
> To have fair women false than none at all.[55]

The only one of all these intolerant critics who really contradicts this statement is Herrick, with his proposal for the complete defeminization of the universe by means of mechanical generation. But if Campion's viewpoint does not please, several others are suggested in Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer:*

> By some the Sex is blam'd without design,
> Light harmless censure, such as yours and mine,
> Sallies of wit, and vapors of our wine.
> Others the justice of the Sex condemn,
> And wanting merit to create esteem,
> Wou'd hide their own defects by cens'ring them.
> But they secure in their all-conqu'ring charms,
> Laugh at the vain efforts of false alarms;
> He magnifies their conquests who complains,
> For none wou'd struggle were they not in chains.[56]

[55] *Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. A. H. Bullen, London, 1889, p. 96.
[56] Act IV, Scene ii.

CHAPTER SIX

Light Love

THE troubadours hardly thought it necessary to specify anything so obvious as that love should be taken seriously. That was their major premise, without which all of the rules of conduct so carefully formulated would have been patently absurd; the patience, the servitude, the elaborate courtesy demanded of a lover were all based on the assumption that love is the most important thing which can come into a man's life, and that a passion for any individual lady is to be treated as though it could never come to an end.

But just as men dared to infringe the specific rules, so they often had the courage, or the effrontery, to deny this implied precept, to treat love openly as a mere pastime. Of course, we may think as we choose about courtly love itself, and to the disinterested observer it can hardly appear as anything more than a fascinating game invented to while away the tedium of medieval castle life, but of that we are not here to judge; it was at any rate a game in which appearances were kept up, and which was doubtless played seriously by many. This chapter will deal with the poets who have actually expressed their refusal to "freeze and fry" and "grieve and groan" as the conventional lover is expected to do—or to remain faithful to a lady whose variety is not so infinite but that age may cloy, and custom stale it. This refusal frequently takes the form of an

amicable agreement between lover and lady, to engage in a pleasant intrigue for a while, and to part without fuss when the novelty has worn off. It is not an immediate rebellion against love or against the mistress, of course, but it is certainly a violation of the romantic tradition.

Naturally, the prevailing tone of these pieces is one of cheerful tolerance; sometimes a gentle melancholy creeps in, but it is short-lived. To brood over the impermanence of love would be to fall into the very trap which these people are trying to avoid; one must regard love as a hobby, which can afford much pleasing distraction as long as one does not devote too much attention to any single piece in one's collection. As Campion said,

> Though love and all his pleasures are but toys,
> They shorten tedious nights.[1]

I find only a faint suggestion of this attitude prior to the sixteenth century. There is an anonymous fifteenth-century song, with the appropriately cheerful refrain, "Up son and merry wethir," in which the author seems to say that he has reached a state of blissful indifference—as shown convincingly by the return of his appetite—though he has not given up the lady who originally caused him so many pangs:

> Somtyme y lovid, so do y yit
> In stedfast wyse and not to flit,
> But in danger my love was knyt,
> A pitous thyng to here.
> . . . . . .

[1] "Now Winter Nights Enlarge."

Now may y ete, drynke, and play,
Walke up and doune fro day to day,
And herkyn what this lovers say,
And laugh at ther manere.[2]

Alexander Scott, as we have already seen, subscribed to the principle that as good love comes as goes, or rather better; therefore he refused to lose any sleep over an individual affair:

I maik it plane for luve agane
Thair sall no sorrow in me synk;
Nor yit in vane to suffer pane
To stop from sleip, frome meit or drink.[3]

Most of Scott's contemporaries, however, seem to have lacked his splendid confidence in the power of the future to supply new loves for old with a constant improvement in the quality of the article; they, except in cases of intense dissatisfaction, preferred the good they had to others that they knew not of. One or two would-be Don Juans stated their views half-heartedly, but it remained for John Donne to publish a fearless statement of his resolve to court "both fair and brown," [4] to place love on an equal footing with tennis, the chase, or any other diverting sport. In "Love's Diet," he explains how he achieved this state of indifference by subjecting his sometime ardent passion to a strict diet of discretion. He allowed it only one sigh a day, one very salty tear, and a few other bare necessities, with the following result:

[2] "Up Son and Merry Wethir."
[3] "In June the Jem of Joy."
[4] "The Indifferent."

Thus I reclaimed my buzzard love, to fly
At what, and when, and how, and where I choose;
Now negligent of sport I lie,
And now, as other falconers use,
I spring a mistress, swear, write, sigh, and weep,
And the game killed, or lost, go talk or sleep.

I may observe that this attitude nearly always appears as an aftermath of a more conventional and more serious emotion, the discomfort of which has opened the sufferer's eyes to the advantages of light love. Thus an anonymous contributor to Byrd's *Songs of Sundry Natures* rehearses his former pangs, and decides henceforth to treat love as "a toy, by fits, to play withal at leisure." [5] A singer in Greaves' *Songs of Sundry Kinds* wins a victory over his more violent feelings, and sends his mistress a promise of lukewarm devotion:

But if she asks if I for love will die,
Tell her, Good faith, good faith, good faith—not I.[6]

A lover in Robert Jones' *First Book of Songs and Airs* returns almost from the Valley of the Shadow, whither his unrequited love has driven him, to join the ranks of careless cavaliers; though his eyes did show his life was almost done, he now affirms:

Nay, I will never die
So long as I can spy;
There be many moe
Though that she do go,
There be many moe, I fear not.[7]

[5] "When I Was Otherwise than Now I Am."
[6] "Ye Bubbling Springs that Gentle Music Makes."
[7] "Farewell, Dear Love, Since Thou Wilt Needs Be Gone."

Another lover rescued from the brink of the grave records his new viewpoint in Henry Youll's *Set of Twenty-four Canzonets:*

> Once I thought to die for love,
> Till I found that women prove
> Traitors in their smiling;
> They say men inconstant be,
> But they themselves love change we see,
> And all is but beguiling.

Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, professed himself just as impervious to romantic love as did John Donne. Like the others, Beaumont seems to have adopted his course after he had come to grief in at least one serious amour; some such experience must have prompted this manifesto:

> Never more will I protest
> To love a woman but in jest.[8]

Elsewhere he maintains that his libertinism shows merely compliance with the wishes of a certain "Mutable Fair" whose favor he seeks and who herself sets the example for such indiscriminate and playful love-making:

> Here, Celia, for thy sake I part
> With all that grew so near my heart;
> . . . . . .
> Now will I wander through the air,
> Mount, make a stoop at every fair,
> And with a fancy unconfin'd
> (As lawless as the sea, or wind)
> Pursue you wheresoe'er you fly,
> And with your various thoughts comply.[9]

[8] "The Indifferent."
[9] "To the Mutable Fair."

Aytoun, after making a more or less thorough analysis of all the principal follies to which man is subject, concludes that the sweetest of them all is love—but not, he says, that ridiculous, overwhelming passion which makes one's life "a perpetual Lent." He expounds his anti-romantic creed at some length, and with no little penetration:

> It hath no coherence with my creed,
> To think that lovers die as they pretend;
> If all that say they die, had died indeed,
> Sure long ere now the world had had an end.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Yet some men, rather than endure the slander
> Of true apostates, will false martyrs prove;
> But I am neither Iphis nor Leander,
> I'll neither hang nor drown myself for love.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Yet have I been a lover by report,
> Yea, I have died for love as others do,
> But praised be God, it was in such a sort,
> That I revived within an hour or two.[10]

This theme naturally appealed to the Cavalier poets, whose rebellions against love did not blind them to the manifold pleasures it offered to one who would not grieve over disappointments. Carew expressed his love of variety allegorically by a charming little figure which placed the entire blame upon his first mistress: the latter, he said, fired his heart and then dried it to tinder by her scorn, so that it is now kindled by any wanton glance cast in his

[10] "On Love."

direction.[11] This figure proved so attractive, in fact, that both Suckling [12] and Cowley [13] borrowed it.

Herrick could well afford to boast a multiplicity of mistresses, since for him, in all probability, it was simply a matter of imagining a Phillis instead of a Dianeme, or a Myrrha to take the place of a Corinna. His taste was as all-inclusive as Donne's:

> Whatsoever thing I see,
> Rich or poor although it be;
> 'Tis a Mistress unto me.
>
> Be my Girl, or fair or brown,
> Do's she smile, or do's she frown:
> Still I write a Sweet-heart down.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Be she fat, or be she lean,
> Be she sluttish, be she clean,
> I'm a man for ev'ry Scene.[14]

But unlike most of the other libertines, Herrick professes to have received a special dispensation from the god of love himself, instead of having reasoned himself into indifference after a painful experience:

> Love bade me ask a gift,
> And I no more did move,
> But this, that I might shift
> Still with my clothes, my Love:
> That favor granted was;

[11] "The Spark."
[12] "The Guiltless Inconstant."
[13] "The Inconstant."
[14] "Love Dislikes Nothing."

Since which, though I love many,
Yet so it comes to pass,
That long I love not any.[15]

Lovelace holds it his duty to himself and to the whole female sex not to confine his allegiance to one, but to "search the black and fair" in order that no "pleasant She" may be neglected for lack of scrutiny. This much concession he makes to the lady whom he has already loved "a tedious twelve months space"—that if his amorous grand tour unearths no fairer treasures he will eventually return to her "ev'n sated with variety":

Why shouldst thou swear I am forsworn,
  Since thine I vowed to be?
Lady, it is already Morn,
  And 'twas last night I swore to thee
  That fond impossibility.

Have I not lov'd thee much and long,
  A tedious twelve months space?
I should all other beauties wrong,
  And rob thee of a new embrace;
  Should I still dote upon thy face.

Not but all joy in thy brown hair
  In others may be found;
But I must search the black and fair,
  Like skillful mineralists that sound
  For treasure in un-plow'd-up ground.

Then if, when I have lov'd my round,
  Thou prov'st the pleasant She;
With spoils of meaner beauties crown'd,

[15] "On Love."

I laden will return to thee,
Ev'n sated with variety.[16]

Suckling frankly treats love as a gourmand treats a feast, except that lacking the gourmand's patience he threatens to "rudely call for the last course 'fore the rest." Having swallowed, as it were, his dessert, he immediately casts his eye about for another banquet:

And O, when once that course is pass'd,
How short a time the feast doth last!
Men rise away, and scarce say grace,
Or civilly once thank the face
That did invite, but seek another place.[17]

Having stated his conviction that a woman can "love this, or that, or any man," he determines to emulate the sex in promiscuousness:

I'll give my fancy leave to range
Through everywhere to find out change;
The black, the brown, the fair shall be
But objects of variety;
I'll court you all to serve my turn,
But with such flames as shall not burn.[18]

The best known, perhaps, and certainly one of the most delightful of all these arrogant rimes is "The Constant Lover," in which Suckling pretends to apologize for his own unheard-of devotion in remaining faithful to the same lady for three days:

[16] "The Scrutiny."
[17] "I Prithee Spare Me, Gentle Boy."
[18] "I am Confirmed a Woman Can."

Out upon it, I have lov'd
  Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
  If it prove fair weather.

. . . . . .

Had it any been but she,
  And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
  A dozen dozen in her place.[19]

Thomas Stanley joins Donne and Herrick in pledging allegiance to the female sex generally:

Wheresoe'er I turn or move,
  A new passion doth detain me:
Those kind beauties that do love
  Or those proud ones that disdain me.

. . . . . .

Black, or fair, or tall, or low,
  I alike with all can sport,
The bold sprightly Thaïs woo,
  Or the frozen vestal court:
Every beauty takes my mind,
Tied to all, to none confin'd.[20]

Very considerately he warns one young lady that a heart like his is not worth the pains and care of capturing it, since at best it will prove a house very much divided against itself:

Alas! when with much charge thou hast
  Brought it at last
Beneath thy power to bow,

[19] Compare the reply by Sir Toby Matthews, below, p. 256.
[20] "Love's Heretic."

It will adore
Some twenty more,
And that, perhaps, you'd not allow.[21]

Most of the Restoration gallants who expressed themselves in poetry made it a point to record their roving tendencies. We can better understand Suckling's surprise at his own three-day passion when we hear Rochester refusing to assume responsibility for more than the present minute:

If I, by Miracle, can be
This live-long Minute true to thee,
'Tis all that Heav'n allows.[22]

Charles Cotton, comparing mistresses to boats, tells how little he cares for sailing far in one vessel:

I do delight delights to vary,
And love not in one hulk to tarry,
But only trim and launch her.[23]

Alexander Brome has apparently been charged with misogynism; he loses no time in correcting that error:

I vow, I am so far from loving none,
That I love every one:
If fair, I must; if brown she be,
She's lovely, and for sympathy,
'Cause we're alike, I love her.[24]

Even Nahum Tate informs his lady that he will never be

[21] "Faith, 'Tis Not Worth Thy Pains and Care."
[22] "Love and Life. A Song."
[23] "Ode."
[24] "The Indifferent."

able to fix his love upon a single object when so many opportunities are offered to a noble soul:

> Believe me, Nymph, you strive in vain
> My Passion to confine:
> 'Tis Noble, and must needs repine,
> To wear the servile Chain.[25]

This light-love attitude was carried over into the eighteenth century rather more extensively, in proportion to the total bulk of its poetic treatments, than were the out-and-out rebellions against love or against individual ladies. This ascendancy, however, is one of quantity rather than quality, for the eighteenth-century declarations are mostly poor imitations of earlier models—many of them, too, are anonymous songs too worthless to quote. A splendid example of the way in which inspiration had left for parts unknown is Dr. Frank Sayers' imitation of Suckling's "Constant Lover," which he labels, with optimistic self-confidence, "*In the manner of Sir J. Suckling*":

> 'Tis mighty strange—three weeks are past,
> And still I constant prove;
> Will this fierce flame for ever last?
> This miracle of love?
>
> Shall I still sigh at Chloe's feet,
> Nor wish my heart to free?
> No doubt—until I chance to meet
> A prettier girl than she.

I shudder to think what must have happened in the Elysian fields, if "natural, easy Suckling," in his search for "some honest lover's ghost," encountered the shade of Dr. Sayers.

[25] "The Unconfin'd."

George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, at least varied the metaphor when he compared women to playing-cards instead of boats or morsels at a feast:

> Women to cards may be compar'd; we play
> A round or two, when us'd we throw away,
> Take a fresh pack; nor is it worth our grieving,
> Who cuts or shuffles with our dirty leaving.[26]

Of the Romantic poets, Byron alone declared for libertinism with any enthusiasm, though one or two others made feeble attempts in the same direction. "For me, I adore some twenty or more," [27] said Byron in some verses addressed to his friend Pigot, and advised the latter to go and do likewise. Pigot, instead of taking the hint, got married, but Byron refused to surrender his freedom:

> I'll rove along from first to last,
> And change whene'er my fancy cloys.[28]

With the transition from Romanticism to Victorianism we find a gentle melancholy suffusing the occasional expressions of light love, and a certain reticence about the poet's determination to love twenty or more; we can only infer, from his conduct toward one lady, that he does not mean to limit himself when he chooses her successor. Moore comments as follows upon his decision to end an affair that has become irksome to both parties:

> 'Tis not that I expect to find
> A more devoted, fond, and true one,
> With rosier cheek or sweeter mind—
> Enough for me that she's a new one.[29]

[26] "Women."
[27] "Reply to Some Verses of J. M. B. Pigot." As Byron said in his journal, " 'Man delights not me,' and only one woman—at a time." (*Letters and Journals*, II, 389).
[28] "To ——."
[29] "To ——."

T. H. Bayly abandons his galloping anapests for once when he informs a mistress that, while he is quite satisfied with her, she is not indispensable:

> I do not wish to part,
> Yet 'twill not break my heart.[30]

W. J. Linton takes leave of his lady with a little tender regret, but manages to view the affair with a philosophy that promises to stand him in good stead in other similar cases:

> It is nought, dear! we have passed a many happy days,
> To say nothing of our nights, but days and nights *are* past.
> Could they have been more lasting— But the proverb soothly says—
> The very best of joys are those which may not last.[31]

Swinburne borrows from Theophile Gautier a delicate allegory—"Love at Sea"—to teach his mistress the impossibility of permanence in love:

> Land me, she says, where love
> Shows but one shaft, one dove,
> One heart, one hand.
> A shore like that, my dear,
> Lies where no man will steer,
> No maiden land.

Wilfrid Blunt urges one of his ladies not to repine if he is unable to meet her love with one as ardent and as fixed, for after all—

> Our hearts are all too weak, the world too wide,
> You but a woman.[32]

[30] "I Will Not Sigh for Thee, No, No!"
[31] "Parting."
[32] *Love-Sonnets of Proteus,* XXVI.

Writing "To the Same, Exhorting her to Patience," he tries again to convince her that her demands are unreasonable:

> Why do we fret at the inconstancy
> Of our frail hearts, which cannot always love? [33]

The Decadent poets toward the end of the century generally preserved this languorous air, refusing to indulge in serious love, but failing to experience the gusto of a true libertine. Arthur Symons, when offered a choice by "an angel of pale desire," voluntarily chooses "a delicate Lust" in preference to a more robust but more troublesome sensation. The angel of pale desire advises:

> "Love is a raging fire,
> Choose thou content instead;
> Thou, the child of the dust,
> Choose thou a delicate Lust."
> "Thou hast chosen!" I said
> To the angel of pale desire.[34]

"Love in Spring" shows the effect of the angel's gift:

> Good to be loved and to love for a little, and then
> Well to forget, be forgotten, ere loving grow life!
> Dear, you have loved me, but was I the man among men?
> Sweet, I have loved you, but scarcely as mistress or wife.

Ernest Dowson expresses himself less languidly, having perhaps held no communion with the angel of pale desire, but even he lacks the vigor of the "I-can-love-both-fair-and-brown" school:

[33] *Ibid.*, XXVII.
[34] "Rosa Mundi." By permission of William Heinemann, Ltd.

We love but while we may.
Let's kiss when kissing pleases,
And part when kisses pall,
Perchance, this time to-morrow,
We shall not love at all.[35]

Austin Dobson, with his usual skill in preserving that "boudoir decorum" essential to *vers de société,* poses as a young man despatching a love letter, and soliloquizes philosophically:

"Miss Blank," at "Blank." Jemima, let it go,
And I, meanwhile, will idle with Sir Walter.
Stay, let me keep the first rough copy, though—
'Twill serve again. There's but the name to alter,
And Love, that starves, must knock at every portal,
In forma pauperis. We are but mortal.[36]

More recent poets, with one or two exceptions, have been content to show their espousal of the cause of light love through their reaction to individual affairs. To be sure, there is Kipling's modernized cavalier, who by taking his fun where he found it discovered some interesting facts about the relationship between the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady.[37] And there is E. G. V. Knox, who prays the god of love to visit him this year "with milder twinges," which will not interfere with his sleep and his appetite so greatly as former romances have done:

I want some mellower romance than these,
Something that will not waken
The bosom of the bard from midnight ease,
Nor spoil his appetite for breakfast, please
(Porridge and eggs and bacon).[38]

[35] "To his Mistress."
[36] "The Love-Letter."
[37] "The Ladies."
[38] "To the God of Love."

Thus it will be noticed that five centuries later than "Up son and merry wethir," the poetic mind still couples light love with heavy eating.

Richard Le Gallienne rouses himself from the spell his mistress has cast over him, and pronounces this judgment:

> Man is too much a god
> To worship even a woman utterly.[39]

John Drinkwater, like Beaumont, embraces the principle of inconstancy in order to even the score with a mistress who has set the example:

> I can be as false as are
> The rainbow loves which are your days,
> And I will gladly go and far,
> Content with your immediate praise.
>
> Your lips, the shyer lover's bane,
> I take with disputation none,
> And am your kinsman in disdain
> When all is excellently done.[40]

Rupert Brooke compares himself to a land-locked sea, never stirred by the long swift tides of ardent love—or to a "wanderer in the middle mist," in love with love, but never mounting to ecstasy, and never quite sure whether the object of his misty affection is this lady, or that.[41] This is why he takes it so calmly when he dreams of being in love again with "The One Before the Last." He comments on the dream:

[39] "I Love her Love No More."
[40] "Defiance," from *Poems*, 1919. By courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company.
[41] See above, p. 184.

Oh! bitter thoughts I had in plenty.
But here's the worst of it—
I shall forget, in Nineteen-twenty,
You ever hurt a bit! [41a]

Gerald Gould actually urges his mistress to give him only a light love which can be taken back when the summer night is spent:

Give me not passion—not the touch
Of lips and limbs that yield too much—
. . . . . .

So, when the summer night is spent,
Take back what you not gave but lent,
And lay at some more stable shrine
The gift I never claimed for mine.[42]

And Victor Black, another land-locked sea, generously warns his mistress against his own attractiveness:

You love me at your peril. Let it be
Thus plainly said, that neither misconstrue.
Take warning from the outset. Others too
Gave all they had—I know not why—to me,
And tasted tears more brackish than the sea.
For though I loved, and can, I never knew
Sheer need for any, no, nor shall for you.

Before we leave this phase of the subject, it is fitting that we should take account of the advisory poems connected with it. The preceding chapter could have no such special section, because anti-feminism is itself merely a general-

[41a] From *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, copyright, 1915, by Dodd, Mead and Company.

[42] "Light Love." By permission of Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

ization, usually voiced for the edification of others. But here we have returned to declarations of personal conduct, and consequently must make a distinction, as with the farewells to love, the personal rebellions, and the demands for equal rights, between those verses which represent the author's own stand and those in which he tries to bring his neighbor, or neighbors, into the fold.

Missionary work for the cause of light love seems to have begun with William Dunbar, who held it "ane point of ignorance To lufe in sic distemperance," and counseled his friends against keeping allegiance to one mistress:

> In Luve to keip allegiance,
> It war als nyse an ordinance
> As quha wald bid ane deid man dance,
> In sepulture.[43]

His countryman, Alexander Scott, seconds him in discouraging the sort of love that causes broken hearts:

> God gif him dolour and diseiss,
> That brekis his hairt, and nocht the bettir.[44]

John Donne, who compared his own mistresses to game birds and himself to a falconer, reverted to a more conventional simile when writing to win converts:

> Changed loves are but changed sorts of meat,
> And, when he hath the kernel eat,
> Who doth not fling away the shell? [45]

Francis Beaumont also tried assiduously to spread the

[43] "Inconstancy of Love."
[44] "To Luve Unluvit It Is Ane Pane."
[45] "Community."

doctrine which he himself professed. Like Shelley, he argued by analogy:

> Why should man be only ti'd
> To a foolish female thing,
> When all creatures else beside,
> Birds and beasts, change every spring?
> Who would then to one be bound,
> When so many may be found? [46]

Despairing perhaps of attaining his object through rationalization, he discarded argument and stated a plain axiom:

> He or she that loves too long
> Sell their freedom for a song.[47]

Herrick attempts gentle persuasion by pointing out the absurdity of the opposite course:

> Why then, say, what is he,
> (To freedom so unknown)
> Who having two or three,
> Will be content with one? [48]

Instances of advice addressed to an individual rather than to mankind as a whole are very rare, but we must not overlook Sir Toby Matthews' reply to Suckling, reproving the latter for his folly in loving "three whole days together":

> Say, but did you love so long?
> In troth I needs must blame you:
> Passion did your judgment wrong,
> Or want of reason shame you.
> . . . . . .

[46] "Love's Freedom."
[47] "The Indifferent."
[48] "The Poet Loves a Mistress, but Not to Marry."

She to whom you prov'd so true,
And that very, very face,
Puts each minute such as you
A dozen dozen to disgrace.

Thomas Stanley's declaration of his own taste for promiscuousness, which we have already seen, was written as an exemplar, that others might use him as a pattern. It is addressed particularly to those whose thoughts are active:

He whose active thoughts disdain
To be captive to one foe,
And would break his single chain,
Or else more would undergo,
Let him learn this art of me,
By new bondage to be free! [49]

Later advice—what there is of it—tends to adopt a tone more suitable for broadside ballads than for poetry. Examples from *Pills to Purge Melancholy* will show what I mean. There we are told:

Take not a Woman's anger ill,
But let this be your comfort still,
That if one won't another will.

Or again:

Hang this whining way of Wooing,
Loving was design'd a sport.

These have neither the force of real bluntness, nor the charm of euphuism.

Edward Young, to be sure, returned to a dignified mode

[49] "Love's Heretic."

of expression in counseling impermanence of love, but unfortunately that is all that can be said for him. He certainly showed no originality in his metaphor:

> Men love a mistress as they love a feast;
> How grateful one to touch, and one to taste!
> Yet sure there is a certain time of day,
> We wish our mistress, and our meat, away.
> . . . . . .
> Eternal love let man, then, never swear.[50]

Altruism in this particular branch of amorous rebellion seems to have died out after the middle of the eighteenth century. There were other libertines, as we have seen, but they were all wrapped up in their own affairs too deeply to care whether others imitated them or not. Perhaps it was for the best.

[50] Satire V.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Reminders of Mortality

I

THE mildest of all rebellions against the conventional code of love-poetry, certainly, is found when the lover reminds his mistress that her charms are "shadows, not substantial things," that "the flower which blooms today forever dies," that "queens have died young and fair," etc. This does not necessarily constitute a revolt against the lady's supremacy, or against love; but I think I am justified in calling it an offense against the article which demands from a lover eternal service, without thought of mere physical beauty,[1] and which enjoins him never, under any circumstances, to say anything that might displease his lady. It is hard to imagine anything that would displease her more than to be told, as Drayton told his mistress, that some day she would find herself in the following state:

> Thy pearly teeth out of thy head so clean,
> That when thou feed'st thy nose shall touch thy chin.[2]

[1] As a matter of fact, the later codifiers of courtly-love procedure, like Andreas Capellanus, took a frankly sensual view, and said that love arises from the contemplation of beauty in the opposite sex. But I think that the earlier spirit at least professed to be more idealistic; the romantic idea of love always tends to stress the spiritual affinity.

[2] *Idea,* VIII.

Of course, we cannot include verses like Moore's "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," in which the poet mentions the ravages of time only to wave them away as of no importance, only to emphasize by contrast the enduring quality of his love. But to dwell upon them as though they made a difference is inconsiderate, to say the least, and unworthy of a perfect lover.

Assuming, then, that such an unkind insistence upon an unpleasant fact constitutes a rebellious utterance, we have still to consider two very different aspects of the matter. There is a wide difference in degree between the insubordination of a man who, out of sheer meanness, or a spirit of revenge, taunts his mistress with the evanescence of her beauty, and that of a man who, with an eye both to his own advancement and the lady's pleasure, brings up the point merely to hasten her acceptance of him as a lover. Though we can hardly excuse the latter from the charge of ungallant conduct, he has at least a better excuse than has his comrade-in-arms, who serves no purpose at all—not even a selfish one—by setting his mistress to count the days between her and hagdom. Since the two attitudes can hardly be discussed together, I shall consider first those reminders which are actuated by spite alone, because these have more of the spirit of rebellion in them. The others, after all, are only a Machiavellian sort of love-making.

The earlier English poets seem to have taken no interest in annoying their ladies for the annoyance' sake. If they could break away, they took their leave; if they considered their position strong enough to warrant a demand for unconditional surrender, they delivered an ultimatum, as we have seen; but the sheer "grouchiness" with which we are at present concerned did not make its appearance until

Chaucer, Gower, Skelton, and even Turberville and Scott, had shown that they cared not for it.

Barnaby Googe, however, was not above jolting his "Mistress A" into remembrance of the transitoriness of her beauty. This lady must have shuddered when she heard:

> Thy face that me tormented so,
> In time shall sure decay,
> And all that I do like or love,
> Shall vanish quite away.
> Thy face in time shall wrinkled be,
> At which I shall be glad.[3]

The melancholy Wyatt sings "To his Lute" verses that are obviously intended for the ear of his mistress, who seems to have forgotten that time will not stand still for her. Wyatt jogs her memory:

> May chance thee lie wither'd and old
> The winter nights that are so cold,
> Plaining in vain unto the moon:
> Thy wishes then dare not be told:
> Care then who list! for I have done.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
> And wish and want as I have done.

George Whetstone, one of the deadliest versifiers of his time, sends a message "To a Disdainful Dame," reminding her that while she may remain disdainful, she certainly cannot retain her charms:

> Dame Beauty's gifts full fickle are, and fade as doth the grass;
> Thy golden hairs to hoary gray will change their glittering hue.

[3] "To Mistress A."

It is not strange that some of the sonneteers, though they might not go the length of casting aside the lady to whom their whole sequence was dedicated, would occasionally relieve their feelings by a well-aimed thrust at her peace of mind. The best way to do this, of course, would be to speak of age and its effects on the human countenance. It is possible that they got this idea from the Platonists, though the latter, of course, did not tell their mistresses such things except to emphasize the spiritual bond between them. William Smith, a sonneteer, bids fair to cause his Chloris some wakeful nights by telling her:

> Though you be fair and beautiful withal;
> And I am black, for which you me despise:
> Know that your beauty subject is to fall!
> . . . . . .
> Then wilt thou mourn! when none shall thee respect.
> Then wilt thou think how thou hast scorned my tears!
> Then, pitiless, each one will thee neglect.[4]

Samuel Daniel twice takes occasion to flout the pride of his Delia, though he cannot—much to his own sorrow—reasonably plead any diminution of his love toward her. Once he invokes the aid of Saturn:

> Time, cruel time, come and subdue that brow![5]

The idea here is that he and his mistress will be on a more even footing when her beauties have been so "subdued" that she may no longer choose from a host of admirers. Later on, Daniel again looks forward to a day, if not of liberation, at least of retribution:

[4] *Chloris,* XXVI.
[5] *Delia,* XXIII.

I once may see when years shall wreck my wrong.[6]

Barnaby Barnes waits until the fifty-ninth sonnet of his *Parthenophil and Parthenope* to remind his lady of a fact which she would only too gladly forget:

> Yet, think, when in thy forehead wrinkles be:
> Men will disdain thee, then, as thou dost me!

Lastly, Michael Drayton actually sorrows because he himself will not live to see and enjoy the ravages of time upon his mistress' face—at any rate, he will not see the arrival of the complete deterioration on which his mind is set:

> There's nothing grieves me but that age should haste,
> That in my days I may not see thee old;
> . . . . . .
> Thy pearly teeth out of thy head so clean,
> That when thou feed'st thy nose shall touch thy chin!
> These lines that now thou scornst, which should delight thee,
> Then would I make thee read but to despite thee.[7]

A few other writers of the time employed this means of making themslves odious to their respective goddesses without incurring the reproach of downright faithlessness. The author of *Alcilia* uses plain, direct language:

> The time will come when, looking in a glass,
> Thy rivelled face with sorrow thou shalt see.[8]

Campion approaches the subject in a more roundabout fashion, but leaves the message unmistakable:

[6] *Delia,* XXXVIII.
[7] *Idea,* VIII.
[8] *Alcilia,* XXXII.

Though you are young, and I am old,

. . . . . .

Yet embers live, when flames do die.
Think that thy fortune still doth cry,
"Thou fool! tomorrow thou must die!"

Sir Robert Aytoun reminds his mistress that while she is "smooth and fair," she is subject to twofold damage, like the rose, which is sure to be withered by time, but whose death is also hastened by too much handling:

Such fate ere long will thee betide
When thou hast handled been awhile.[9]

The rose, of course, has always been a conventional symbol for transient beauty, and we must be prepared to see it appallingly over-used in seventeenth and eighteenth century poetry, especially in connection with the persuasions to joy, which will be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Even the song-books sometimes carried these messages of terror to someone's chosen lady, or to women in general. One of the contributors to Robert Jones' *First Book of Songs and Airs* insists, with vicious delight, that

Time makes beauty transitory.[10]

One of Richard Carlton's *Madrigals* publishes to all young ladies the notice that they have only a short time in which to enjoy their beauty:

[9] "Inconstancy Reproved."
[10] "She Whose Matchless Beauty Staineth."

E'en as the flowers do wither
That maidens fair do gather,
So doth their beauty blazing,
Whereon there is such gazing.

. . . . . .

Ye dames, for all your pride and mirth
Your beauty shall be turned to earth.

Similarly in Orlando Gibbons' *First set of Madrigals,* which are said to have been written by Sir Christopher Hatton, one of the songs deals, sermon-like, with the passing of beauty:

Fair is the rose, yet fades with heat or cold.

. . . . . .

So short-lived beauty a vain gloss doth borrow,
Breathing delights today, but none tomorrow.

In an anonymous group of poems belonging to the time of James I, the author, after bidding his mistress go whither she will, adds these quaint but ominous lines:

And when thou art out of date,
Then repent thee, too too late.[11]

Herrick, though he may have been a poet of trifles in the greater part of his work, celebrating only ephemera, never forgot that Time's scythe would mow down these trifles relentlessly, and he liked to expatiate on the subject. If *Hesperides* were purged of all the poems on this theme, a mere skeleton would remain behind. Fortunately for those who have plowed through acres of poetical roses, Herrick's floral taste seems to have inclined rather toward a less fragrant but more colorful flower, the tulip; so that

[11] "Go Thy Ways."

instead of comparing his mistress to the "half-blown rose" that satisfied so many poets, he tells her:

> You are a Tulip seen to-day
> But (Dearest) of so short a stay;
> That where you grew, scarce man can say.
> . . . . . .
> You are the Queen all flowers among,
> But die you must (fair Maid) ere long,
> As He, the maker of this Song.[12]

Then he calls the attention of all young ladies to "A Bed of Tulips":

> Come, virgins, then, and see
> Your frailties, and bemoan ye,
> For lost like these, 'twill be,
> As time had never known ye.

He strikes out to right and to left, telling Dianeme to "be not proud of those two eyes," [13] since they will soon be lusterless; reminding Myrrha of

> Those evil days that be
> Now posting on to punish thee; [14]

and intimating to "A Gentlewoman Objecting to him his Gray Hairs" that she will come to as sorry a pass, and that ere long. "Sylvia, A Mistress," hears this grim prophecy:

> Upon thy Form more wrinkles yet will fall,
> And coming down, shall make no noise at all.

[12] "A Meditation for his Mistress."
[13] "To Dianeme."
[14] "To Myrrha Hard-Hearted."

Although the Puritans were much concerned with the mortality of the flesh, they cannot be said to have spent much time writing to their mistresses about it in poetry —probably for the reason that the Puritans, as we have already had occasion to notice, did not write, or at least did not publish much love-poetry of any kind. From a manuscript of Dr. Wilson, the musician, dating about 1655, comes this homiletic song, designed to mortify the pride of all fair maidens:

> Be she as fair as lilies be,
> Lilies wither, so must she:
> Be she youthful as the bud,
> A frost one day will numb her blood.

It would seem that the Puritan influence lingered on, however, for the later reminders sound just a little more solemn—a trifle more Puritanical. Flatman, who was not given to preaching, nevertheless assumes a ministerial tone in "A Defiance":

> Be not too proud, imperious Dame,
> Your charms are transitory things.

John Hall takes stock of his own position, and finds that he has foolishly based his love on enthusiasm for a quality that will not last:

> What do I here! What's beauty? 'las
> How doth it pass!
> As flowers, as soon as smelled at,
> Evaporate,
> Even so this shadow, ere our eyes
> Can view it, flies.[15]

[15] "Of Beauty."

Thomas Stanley has to go to Ronsard for inspiration in order to avoid the homiletic tone, and even then succeeds only in part:

> Fair rebel to thyself and Time,
> Who laugh'st at all my tears,
> When thou hast lost thy youthful prime,
> And age his trophy rears,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Weighing thy inconsiderate pride,
> Thou shalt in vain accuse it.[16]

Having already had occasion to observe the unoriginality of eighteenth-century poets, we learn with no surprise that they adhered faithfully to the rose-tradition. So Ogilvie sends an epistle "To Miss ——, with a Flower," beginning:

> Delia, mark that blowing rose.

And Henry Baker despatches a symbolic rose to his Flora, with the following injunction, which to the frivolous mind may seem to smack just a wee bit of cockney language:

> In this, my lovely maid! you see
> How blooming sweet and fair you be.[17]

She is also expected to see, of course, how quickly she will fade and die. Baker seems to have had a great deal of trouble with his "Coy Flora," for more than once he had to seek consolation in telling her such things as this:

> Consider, Flora! Age will come,
> And on you lay his icy hand.[18]

[16] "The Revenge."
[17] "To Flora, with a Rose."
[18] "Advice to Coy Flora."

Certainly nothing could have suited the tastes of the "graveyard" poets better than this theme of fading beauty, connected as it is with the whole idea of mortality and death; nevertheless, we find only one of them treating it in such a way as to merit representation here. But this one—Edward Young—revelled in it, addressing himself to a hypothetical young maiden representing all of her kind:

> Ah! why so vain, though blooming in thy spring,
> Thou shining, frail, ador'd, and wretched thing?
> Old age will come; disease may come before;
> Fifteen is full as mortal as threescore.
> Thy fortune, and thy charms, may soon decay:
> But grant these fugitives prolong their stay,
> Their basis totters, their foundation shakes;
> Life, that supports them, in a moment breaks.[19]

Only the faintest echoes of this mood may be heard in the Romantic poets, but the nineteenth century took hold of the idea again and used it occasionally with effect. Gerald Griffin reminds his Eileen of approaching decrepitude:

> Youth must with time decay,
> Eileen Aroon!
> Beauty must fade away,
> Eileen Aroon! [20]

The melancholy Thomas Wade finds himself in a lamentable state—unable to take pleasure in anything because of the thought of his mistress' eventual dissolution, and unable to refrain from telling her about it:

[19] Satire VI.
[20] "Eileen Aroon."

Lady! I know not what dark spell inthralls me,
Shutting dear Beauty from my senseless soul!
List I thy music? A dread accent calls me
Unto Death's sepulchre, or grass-grown knoll!
Feel I thy little hand, fast closed in mine,
A lily field, fair river'd with clear blue?
I clasp Death's icy fingers, etc.[21]

Several recent poets have taken it upon themselves to whisper this doleful message into a lady's ear. Rupert Brooke, with characteristic directness, utters a gruesome prophecy to his mistress, who has married another:

Then you'll be tired; and passion dead and rotten;
And he'll be dirty, dirty! O lithe and free
And lightfoot, that the poor heart cries to see,
That's how I'll see your man and you!—but you
—Oh, when that time comes, you'll be dirty too! [22]

With how much greater delicacy does Walter De la Mare point out to his lady the sure doom that awaits her beauty:

Walk in beauty. Vaunt thy rose.
  Flaunt thy transient loveliness.
Pace for pace with thee there goes
  A shape that hath not come to bless.

I thine enemy? . . . Nay, nay.
  I can only watch and wait
Patient treacherous time away,
  Hold ajar the wicket gate.[23]

[21] "Indirection."

[22] "Jealousy," from *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke,* copyright, 1915, by Dodd, Mead and Company.

[23] "The Quiet Enemy," from *Collected Poems, 1901–18.* By courtesy of Henry Holt and Company.

W. H. Davies unfortunately has a score to pay, and consequently finds his revenge in a somewhat bitter reminder:

> Hear me, thou proud deceitful maid,
> Tell how thy charms must droop and fade.[24]

Edward Davison, after a quarrel, and a reconciliation effected by a song and a kiss, puts in a word of remonstrance to show that he does not entirely forget:

> Were thy beauty now what it shall be
> Pardon might not be bought so easily.[25]

The last word on the subject, in point of time, was said by Sacheverell Sitwell, and it suggests sinister possibilities:

> Your world of beauty to Time's clock
> Will parch like a desert, shut like a lock;
> How long, how long, before the tooth of Time
> Treats you like this, turns you to rime? [26]

II

The other type of reminders of mortality—often called "persuasions to joy"—although more numerous, need not detain us for more than a brief summary. In the first place, it is only by the strictest interpretation of the code of romantic love that these can be called rebellions at all; in frankly setting such great store by physical attractions, the poet divests courtly love of any semblance of idealism that it may have possessed or affected to possess, and he frequently implies that the inevitable disappearance of

[24] "The Quarrel."
[25] "Sonnet II," from *Harvest of Youth*, 1927. By courtesy of Harper and Brothers.
[26] "Warning."

these charms will mark the end of his interest in their owner. But not many lovers are so arrogant as to imply that ladies are the only ones with a slippery hold on youth; most of the poets merely call attention to the irresistible march of time, which makes it advisable for both lover and beloved to disport themselves while they may. Perhaps each wish of Tom Moore's heart will entwine itself verdantly about "the dear ruin" of his mistress' endearing young charms, but Catullus prefers the present:

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus.

. . . . . .

Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.

And a host of English poets, feeling just as skeptical about the pleasure to be derived from twining themselves about a "dear ruin," have cried out to their mistress, "*Carpe diem!*" and "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!"

The ways in which they have said it, however, are appallingly few. Indeed, if we exclude the translations and imitations of Catullus V, of Horace's Ode (I, 11) to Leuconoë, and of Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds,"—which is presumably based on some anonymous Latin verses formerly attributed to Ausonius [27]—we exclude nearly all of the themes that have been used in this connection. Verses like Waller's "Go, lovely Rose," in which the lady is urged not to gather but to observe the flower, may be regarded as derivatives of the third type just mentioned. This last theme, with an occasional substitution of a tulip or a lily for the conventional rose, has been the most widely used

[27] See Barrett Wendell, *The Temper of the XVIIth Century in English Literature*, N. Y., 1904, p. 151.

of all—so much so, in fact, that after going through the lot of these poems one can sympathize with the members of the ship's crew in Marryat's *Peter Simple,* who were poisoned by "otto of roses."

One or two of the earlier poets managed to escape the bane of the rose-cult, but unfortunately their persuasions have only this negative distinction to recommend them. Turberville does not alter his customary stolid, alliterative style when he "Exhorteth his Lady to Take Time, While Time Is." Alexander Montgomerie, as usual, carries alliteration to an extreme that renders his verse merely a curiosity:

> Tak tym in tyme, vhill tyme is to be tane,
> Or ye may wish and want it vhen ye wald.
> Ye get no grippe agane, if it be gane;
> Then, vhill ye haif it, best is for to hald.
> Thoght ye be yong, yit once ye may be ald.[28]

The poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, adhered closely to the three models named above, and while they seldom fell into the amusing naïveté of Turberville and Montgomerie they produced hardly anything worthy of special notice. Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds" and Waller's "Go, lovely Rose," to be sure, retain their charm in spite of the satiety induced by reading scores like them, but they are so well known that quotation is unnecessary. Andrew Marvell's verses "To his Coy Mistress," however, are worth stopping for, because of the fresh vigor and easy flow of their language. Had we but world enough, and time, says Marvell to the delaying lady, nothing could be more pleasant

[28] "Yong Tender Plante! In Spring Tym of your Yeirs."

than to postpone the fulfillment of our love for ages while we nursed our hopeful passion in the best romantic style:

> I would
> Love you ten years before the Flood,
> And you should, if you please, refuse
> Till the conversion of the Jews.
> My vegetable love should grow
> Vaster than empires, and more slow.

But a certain ominous sound intrudes upon these fancies, and moves the lover to protest against his lady's coyness:

> But at my back I always hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast eternity.
> Thy beauty shall no more be found,
> Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
> My echoing song: then worms shall try
> That long preserved virginity,
> And your quaint honor turn to dust,
> And into ashes all my lust:
> The grave's a fine and private place,
> But none, I think, do there embrace.

It makes little difference whether the coy mistress really existed or not, but I see nothing in the poem itself to indicate that she partakes of the nature of Herrick's Perilla or Dianeme. Yet Grierson will have none of her: "The mistress is imaginary. 'On ne badine pas avec l'amour' in this fashion, if the passion is a real one. Marvell's heart was not here." [29]

[29] H. J. C. Grierson, *Cross Currents in Eng. Lit. of the XVII Cent.*, London, 1929, p. 303.

For the rest since a very little botanical lore will suffice to satisfy the reader that roses fade, he may be spared a score or so of reminders. The statistician may possibly be interested in one or two estimates of what we might call the "love-expectancy" of a damsel in the seventeenth century—though these estimates may conceivably have been influenced by the fact that their authors meant to frighten a certain young lady into embracing the joys of love. The Earl of Dorset, writing of the age at which she must either choose quickly or resign herself to a suitorless middle-age, places it low indeed, for he says:

> All maidens are mortal at fourteen.[30]

An anonymous song of the period, however, allows her considerably more:

> At twenty-five in women's eyes
> Beauty fades, at thirty dies.[31]

John Cleveland had an aptitude for bringing in prosaic, but undeniably original imagery—a gift which he displayed in writing "To Julia, to Expedite her Promise":

> Think but how soon the market fails;
> Your Sex lives faster than the males,
> As if to measure Age's span
> The Sober *Julian* were th'Account of Man,
> Whil'st You live by the fleet *Gregorian.*

He even managed to work in an allusion to recent events in the Dutch War, urging Julia to

[30] "Song to Chloris."
[31] "Fading Beauty."

Hold not out, lest (like Ostend) thou be
Nothing but Rubbish at Delivery.

These persuasions to joy continued to accumulate throughout the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth as well, but without contributing any new methods of approach. The rose remained popular as a symbol, and Horace and Catullus also found great favor, particularly in the eighteenth century. Even the very recent treatments of this theme, sad to say, strike the same old notes; the best that can be said for them is that they are few in number—which may indicate that poets have at last recognized the folly of saying over again what Herrick or Waller has said better. Those who wish to pursue the subject in detail will find a complete list in the appendix, but the connection of the whole group with amorous revolt is too tenuous to warrant citing further examples here.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Miscellaneous

IN this chapter I shall give a brief account of some four or five special types of revolt which are too interesting to ignore, but none of which is represented by enough poems to entitle it to a chapter for itself. Two of them are really subdivisions of the personal rebellion, but they have features which set them off from the main body of verses belonging to this type. The others are perhaps not full-fledged revolts at all, but this discussion would not be complete without them.

I

SOPHISTRY

In tracing the course of amorous rebellion we have found that the vast majority of mutineers either brazened it out with utter disregard for the approval or disapproval of others, or gave, at most, a simple reason for their action, such as their own advancing years, obduracy or inconstancy on the part of the mistress, etc.—in other words, some excuse that seemed quite adequate to the lover at the moment, for he had discarded the premises of courtly-love theory altogether and in his new-found freedom did not feel it necessary to reconcile his views with any other. We have seen no real attempt at self-justification by a

process of reasoning calculated to silence all criticism, even from the lady herself—to prove by logical, or apparently logical inference that the lover's rebellion is really a part of nature's plan, against which it would be foolish and perhaps impossible to strive. The reason for the scarcity of such attempts, if I may judge from those that do exist, is the fact that they must needs rest upon specious reasoning, and rebellious lovers, on the whole, realize that they lack the skill in philosophical jugglery necessary to make black seem white.

It would have redounded more to the credit of the party, I believe, had they all been deterred from such a formidable task; in their frank egotism they were impregnable, but when they set up as philosophers they invited a scrutiny which none of them can well bear. The fact is that every one of these would-be sophists has the air of apologizing for something that he knows is wrong, and which he consequently tries to justify not only in others' eyes, but in his own. This does not make for convincing arguments.

The weakest intellects, of course, transfer all the blame to the gods, or nature, since these, as Gilbert says, "give no retaliating whack." Turberville, after considering certain aspects of the universe about him, "Excuseth himself for renouncing his Love and Lady, imputing the same to his Fate and Constellation." It is only too obviously the the easiest way out:

> Weighing with my self each one,
> I can none fitter find
> Than that to men such blessed hap
> Is by the Gods assign'd.

Cowley also pretends to be deeply impressed by the perpetual change that goes on in the world, and explains to his lady that she cannot reasonably ask him to run counter to the general scheme of things:

> The world's a scene of changes; and to be
> Constant, in Nature were inconstancy.[1]

Burns also attempted to justify his amorous defections by pointing out that they were in harmony with the over-soul:

> Why then ask of silly Man
> To oppose great nature's plan?
> We'll be constant while we can—
> You can be no more, you know.[2]

A few more enterprising minds, however, spurned this unmanly evasion of responsibility, and sought to establish themselves behind a wall of casuistry. But they have, as we shall see, only two methods of approach. One group, beginning with Lovelace, maintains arbitrarily that a person who changes his or her mind is no longer the same person. On the basis of this assumption Lovelace renounces his allegiance to a mistress who has become less complaisant than she was when he made his vows:

> Then, chang'd thus, no more I'm bound to you,
> Than swearing to a saint that proves untrue.[3]

Robert, Earl Nugent, takes advantage of the same argument to justify his own vow-break:

[1] "Inconstancy."
[2] "Inconstancy in Love."
[3] "When I By Thy Fair Shape Did Swear."

I loved thee, beautiful and kind,
And plighted an eternal vow;
So alter'd are thy face and mind,
'Twere perjury to love thee now.

In such cases as these, one can hardly help feeling that the justification is a greater offense than the rebellion itself; these men have not even the courage of their misdeeds, but must needs deceive themselves.

The other group attempted an even more tenuous bit of casuistry, by which they pretended that a change of mistresses was not an act of inconstancy at all, because the lover's real deity was beauty in the abstract and not any of its single manifestations. "Inconstancy is the greatest of sins," says a poem ascribed to Herbert of Cherbury, but

Inconstancy no sin will prove
If we consider that we love
But the same beauty in another face,
Like the same body in another place.

Stanley subscribes to the same doctrine when he tells his mistress that he is entirely justified in leaving her for a more lovely lady, even though the former has done nothing to forfeit her sovereignty:

I vow'd t'adore
The fairest Saint,
Nor chang'd whilst thou wert she:
But if another thee outshine,
Th'inconstancy is only thine.[4]

Thomas Wade, considerably later, excuses his love for variety on the same specious grounds:

[4] "Chang'd, Yet Constant."

'Tis the one deity of Beauty I
In many a matchless temple deify.[5]

But the boldest sophist of all, it seems to me, was Tom Moore, who pleaded not guilty in answer to a charge of faithlessness because he had inadvertently fallen in love with a new mistress who looked very much like the old. In such a case, says Moore to the first damsel, it was the very intensity of my love for your beauty that brought about my new attachment, for which I am consequently not to be blamed:

Then blame me not, if false I be,
'Twas love that wak'd the fond excess;
My heart had been more true to thee,
Had mine eyes priz'd thy beauty less.[6]

II

EGOTISM

Humility, as we have had occasion to observe more than once, is an outstanding quality of the ideal lover, for he is the one whose character is supposed to be benefited by his devotion and service; his mistress is perfect already. But a certain coterie of poets, unable to stomach this arrangement, have had the effrontery to declare it a mere fable, at least so far as their own cases were concerned. That is to say, a lover, while not necessarily abandoning his lady, has repented him of the extravagant praises lavished upon her, and then, having reduced her to the position of an equal, has decided that even this does not

[5] " 'Many'; Yet, But 'One.' "
[6] "The Resemblance."

represent the true state of affairs—for he, who has the power to deify and then to mortalize a lady, must necessarily occupy a higher place in the human scale than does the lady herself. He is the sculptor, she the statue; she is the product of his imagination, or at any rate she owes her present excellence to the refinements which he has wrought in originally crude material.

John Donne, for example, by way of convincing his mistress that she owes more to him than to a mere husband, tells her unmistakably that he (Donne) transformed her from "Nature's lay idiot" to "a bliss-full Paradise," while her husband only married her:

> Thou art not by so many duties his,
> . . . . . .
> As mine, who have with amorous delicacies
> Refin'd thee into a bliss-full Paradise.
> Thy graces and good words my creatures be;
> I planted knowledge and life's tree in thee.[7]

The Earl of Pembroke, having perhaps less confidence in himself, falls back upon empirical philosophy to convince his mistress that she is not a beauty by any absolute standards, but only in so far as he and other men choose to consider her fair:

> When men's eyes first looked upon thee
> They bestowed thy beauty on thee.
> When thy colors first were seen
> By judging sight,
> Had men's eyes praised black or green,
> Then thy face had not been bright.[8]

[7] "Elegy VII."
[8] "A Paradox."

Thomas Carew, however, gives himself full credit for the admirable, but purely mythical figure that he has made of his Celia. As the ungrateful girl seems to have mistaken this artistic creation for her real self, the sculptor reminds her that he knows her in her "mortal state," and warns her to show more consciousness of her obligations, "lest what I made I uncreate":

Know, Celia, since thou art so proud,
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown.
Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd
Of common beauties lived unknown,
Had not my verse extoll'd thy name,
And with it imp'd the wings of Fame.

That killing power is none of thine;
I gave it to thy voice and eyes;
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
Thou art my star, shin'st in my skies;
Then dart not from thy borrow'd sphere
Lightning on him that fix'd thee there.[9]

Even the anonymous author of a song in Walter Porter's *Madrigals and Airs* unblushingly states that he does not love his mistress because she is fair—she is fair because he loves her:

Tell me where the beauty lies—
In my mistress? or in my eyes?
Is she fair? I made her so.

. . . . . .

Then tell my mistress that I love her,
Think her fair, 'cause I approve her.

Alexander Brome rudely jolts his mistress into recollec-

[9] "Ingrateful Beauty Threatened."

tion of the fact that his amorous conceits are, after all, but conceits:

> 'Twas all but Poetry.
> I could have said as much by any she,
> You are no beauty of your self, but are made
> so by me.[10]

Having thus effected a readjustment of the artificial relationship between himself and his own lady, he sets out to perform a similar service for all mankind. In behalf of his own sex he addresses the other:

> Tho' we say you're fair, you know,
> We your beauty do bestow,—
> For our fancy makes you so.[11]

No less appreciative of his own contribution is Henry Baker, who contrasts it with the relative worthlessness of the lucre possessed by his rival. Flora, apparently, has been eying the lucre not unfavorably:

> Mistaken Fair! What I present,
> Outlasting Gold and Adamant,
> Records you in the Rolls of Fame,
> And gives an everlasting Name.[12]

It is not at all surprising to find Landor in this group, for he was never one to disparage himself. He assures his lady that she will appreciate him, when it is too late:

[10] "Plain Dealing."
[11] "To a Coy Lady."
[12] "To Flora."

Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak
Four not exempt from pride some future day.
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek
Over my open volume you will say
"This man loved *me*," then rise and trip away.

W. C. Bennett becomes positively lyrical when he thinks how much his mistress owes to him—how even her wit, in which he concedes nature to have had a part, would have lacked "point" without the help of his pen:

How much your beauties owe,
O sweetest sweet, to me!

. . . . . .

While your laughing wit
By nature's given, I own,
My praise has lent to it,
Point, to it, else unknown,
Due to my praise alone.

Locker-Lampson closes the list with a similar reminder that he is the instrument through which his lady has gained her renown, and a hint that he can change his tune if need be. The threat is reminiscent of the ancient dread of offending a poet, so frequently met with in old Celtic stories. This verse is an adaptation from the French of Corneille:

In days to come the peer or clown,
With whom I still shall win renown,
Will only know that you were fair
Because I chanced to say you were.

Proud Lady! Scornful beauty mocks
At aged heads and silver locks;
But think awhile before you fly,
Or spurn a poet such as I.[13]

III

DISILLUSIONMENT

A little less egotistical, but just as objectionable in a lover, is the determination to tell the truth, even if it hurts—to tell the truth, especially if it hurts. For while the theory of romantic love does not admit that a lady may have other than a flawless character and a perfect form, practice, I believe, has generally resulted in findings that discredit this belief—without seriously diminishing the attraction of *das Ewigweibliche*. I doubt, in fact, whether one devoted lover in ten would exchange his flesh-and-blood mistress, with all her imperfections, for the goddess he idolizes in his verses. But to welcome the shortcomings that make her human, and to call her attention to them, are two very different things, and are apt to lead to very different results. On the one hand, there is the prudent courtly lover, who openly worships a lifeless statue, or an angel, and inwardly rejoices that his *amie* resembles neither; on the other hand, less conversant with human nature, is a lover who has probably been deceived by his own mythical creation until its unreality is forced upon him, and who, in the first rancor of disillusionment, blurts out his discovery. Like Catullus (*Carm.* LXXII, LXXV), he may simply state the disagreeable truth, and not actually abandon the lady, but he is treading dangerous ground;

[13] "To My Mistress."

for this we have the authority of Tom Moore, who instructs young women as follows on the necessity for dissimulation in love:

> Long as you're false and he believes you,
> Long as you trust, and he deceives you,
> So long the blissful bond endures,
> And while he lies, his heart is yours:
> But, oh! you've wholly lost the youth
> The instant that he tells you truth.[14]

Although the ranking of the youth as a total loss may not be altogether justified, I think a brief account should be given of the poets who have taken this bold and unloverlike step. Obviously this attitude resembles the one treated in the previous section, but here I shall include those who simply dispel the aura of feminine divinity, without boasting that they created it or that they can bestow it at will. These men are plain speakers, with a higher regard for candor than for ideal gallantry. Nowhere is their doctrine better stated than in a sonnet by Sir John Davies, who, after telling his mistress exactly what her defects are, declares himself in favor of bluntness first, last, and always:

> Yet though some wide mouths call a Jade a Jade,
> I'll speak more spruce, yet call a Spade, a Spade.[15]

It is hard to imagine Turberville calling a spade a spade, but upon "finding his Love flitted from wonted Troth" he does refuse to pretend that she is not of the flitting kind:

[14] "Lying."
[15] *Wit's Pilgrimage,* Sonnet XCI.

If she be one of Cressid's crew
And swerve her former Hest,
No Lucrece must I term her then,
For that were but a jest.[16]

Campion likewise sees the folly of self-deception, and resolves not to gloss over any foul deeds with fair words:

I cannot call her true that's false to me,
Nor make of women more than women be.[17]

In pursuance of this policy, a little later, when praising his mistress, he carefully shuns overstatement:

Fair you are, and passing fair;
You know it, and 'tis true:
Yet let none despair
But to find as fair as you.[18]

Carew lays before his Celia a complete and unflattering exposition of his method of making love to her—a method which he has apparently decided to discard, since there is no other plausible reason for this revelation:

When, Celia, I intend to flatter you,
And tell you lies to make you true,
I swear
There's none so fair;
And you believe it too.

. . . . . .

Yet grow not proud by such Hyperboles:

[16] "The Lover Finding his Love Flitted," etc.
[17] "Vain Men Whose Follies Make a God of Love."
[18] "Dear, If I with Guile Would Gild a True Intent."

Were you as excellent as these,
While I
Before you lie,
They might be had with ease.

Knowing the raptures awakened in Herrick by the "liquefaction" of Julia's clothes, we might suspect that he was really more enamored of her wardrobe than of the lady herself. This suspicion is confirmed by another poem, also to Julia, in which, after praising her "lawny films," "airy silks," and other articles of apparel, he informs her with disconcerting frankness:

I must confess, mine eye and heart
Dotes less on Nature, than on Art.[19]

Suckling, like Carew, refused to make of women more than women be, but he sympathized with them and gave them friendly advice on the way in which less experienced gallants than he might be kept in a state of expectant awe:

Then, fairest mistress, hold the power you have,
By still denying what we still do crave:
In keeping us in hopes strange things to see
That never were, nor are, nor e'er shall be.[20]

Then Charles Cotton, with his usual straightforwardness, holds the mirror up to Chloris—that is, he invites her to use her own mirror, but he tells her rudely what she will find there:

[19] "Art above Nature, to Julia."
[20] "Against Fruition."

Lord! how you take upon you still!
  How you crow and domineer!
How! still expect to have your will,
  And carry the dominion clear,
  As you were still the same that once you were!
. . . . . .
Faith! consult your glass, and see
  If I han't reason on my side;
Are those eyes still the same they used to be?
Come, come, they're altered, 'twill not be deni'd.[21]

Prior, though like the others he has not broken away from his mistress, manages by his acrimonious tone to give the impression that Phillis is rapidly losing her hold on him:

Phillis, this pious talk give o'er,
And modestly pretend no more;
  It is too plain an art:
Surely you take me for a fool,
And would by this prove me so dull,
  As not to know your heart.

William Walsh goes directly back to Catullus for inspiration, telling his mistress that he sees her in her true colors and feels a resultant degradation of his passion for her:

I know thee now, and though I fiercelier burn,
Thou art become the object of my scorn:
See what thy falsehood gets; I must confess
I love thee more, but I esteem thee less.[22]

It would seem that Hilaire Belloc went to the same place for the idea of a sonnet in which he bemoans his disillusionment with the world, love, and his mistress:

[21] "To Chloris."
[22] "Epigram to his False Mistress."

Now dawn's but daybreak, seas but water are,
Night darkness only, all wide heaven just air:
And you to whom these fourteen lines I tell,
My beauty, my desire: but not my love as well.[23]

IV

PSEUDO-REVOLTS

If only to warn the reader of rebellious love-verses against the danger of forming an opinion without reading a poem through, some mention should be given to those cases in which a revolt, for one reason or another, is followed by a recantation in the same poem. For all writers are not so carefully informative as Thomas Watson, who tells us in the introduction to Sonnet XVIII of his *Hekatompathia*, for example: "This sonnet is perfectly pathetical, and consisteth in two principal points: whereof the first containeth an accusation of Love for his hurtful effects and usual tyranny; the second part is a sudden recantation or excuse of the Author's evil words, by casting the same upon the neck of his beloved, as being the only cause of his late frenzy and blasphemous rage so lavishly poured forth in foul speeches."

Such an introduction has its drawbacks, however, for it takes away whatever suspense we might feel in reading the sonnet, and in Watson's case, at least, it gives a false impression, for his sonnets are not nearly so "pathetical" as he thought they would be. The sixty-first sonnet of Michael Drayton's *Idea* is infinitely more pathetical, but it belongs to the same type, for after this highly rebellious beginning—

[23] "Now Shall the Certain Purpose of My Soul." By permission of Gerald Duckworth and Company, Ltd.

> Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—
> Nay, I have done, you get no more of me—

the poet confesses in the end that his Passion, while faint and expiring, is not absolutely beyond hope of recovery:

> Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
> From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

A similar change may be seen in the forty-seventh sonnet of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, where the poet, after brooding over his misfortune in loving a disdainful mistress, musters up courage to leave her:

> Virtue, awake! Beauty but beauty is;
> I may, I must, I can, I will, I do
> Leave following that which it is gain to miss.
> Let her go!

But the lady herself appears on the scene, and see what happens:

> Soft, but here she comes! Go to,
> Unkind, I love you not! O me, that eye
> Doth make my heart to give my tongue the lie!

This is not the only case in which Sidney proved a renegade to the cause of rebellious love. In "Love Is Dead," he issued a complete retractation of his heresy even after such an unmistakable opening as this:

> Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread
> For Love is dead:
> All Love is dead, infected
> With plague of deep disdain:
> Worth, as nought worth, rejected,

And faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy;
From such a female frenzy;
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us.

Sometimes there is a guileful purpose in the poet's mind when he appears to renounce the sovereignty of his mistress. Campion, for example, was merely trying a new method of persuasion, based on his observation of feminine psychology, when he wrote:

Thou art not fair, for all thy red and white,
For all those rosy ornaments in thee.

In the end he reveals the trick:

Now show it, if thou be a woman right—
Embrace and kiss and love me, in despite!

This is enough to show the untrustworthiness of beginnings as indices to the real trend of the author's thought in rebellious love-poetry. Such reversals of mood are not confined to the seventeenth century; they may crop up anywhere. There is, for example, a poem by Harold Monro, appropriately called "Change of Mind," in which the lover begins by cursing the rain and his mistress, who has sent for him in spite of the inclement weather; once he would have gone to her through all sorts of wet, but now he wants to close her like a finished book. Yet, at the last moment, he remembers having seen a possible rival loafing about her cottage recently, and decides that the rain is letting up sufficiently to permit him to answer her summons.

V

THE UNGALLANT CHOICE

We have seen, under previous classifications, examples of love given over for the sake of something else which offered more attractions—for wine, for flowers, for public life, etc. For the most part, however, these poems did not lay much stress on the actual choice involved; they simply mentioned the alternative by way of assuring the public that loss of love does not necessarily mean loss of interest in everything. There are a few cases in which the lover actually debates the choice in writing, and finally declares for the ungallant alternative—in other words, not the lady. I want to cite two examples of this special type in conclusion of what must seem by this time to be an interminable list.

In the first place, there is "The Jolly Toper, that Won't Leave his Bottle to Get the Best Wife in Christendom." This gentleman, as might be expected, inhabits the pages of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*. His fiancée, it seems, has told him flatly that he may have her or his wine, but not both:

> She has forbid me Wine,
> Or else she'll not marry,
> But were she all Divine,
> A Maid she should tarry.

The jolly toper examines the situation, not with absolute impartiality, and takes his stand in the closing lines:

> Boy, bring tother Flask,
> And let her go to the Devil.

The other great promoter of ungallantry is tobacco. King James thought smoking a filthy and immoral habit. So did the lady whose dislike for the weed furnished the occasion for Kipling's "The Betrothed." Here the lover painstakingly counts up the pleasures afforded by a wife, as contrasted with the pleasures (to say nothing of the economy) of a Cuba stout, and finds the former wanting. Besides, he has been doing without Maggie quite successfully, while he has never done without cigars. The result is inevitable:

> A million surplus Maggies are willing to bear the yoke:
> And a woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a Smoke.
>
> Light me another Cuba; I hold to my first-sworn vows.
> If Maggie will have no rival, I'll have no Maggie for spouse! [24]

[24] From *Departmental Ditties and Barrack-Room Ballads*. By permission of the author and Doubleday, Doran and Company.

In Conclusion

IF anyone has followed the tenuous thread of this discourse through the labyrinth of quotations that separates the first page from the last, he may legitimately ask why the writer ever attempted to stretch such a thread through such a labyrinth. This hypothetical reader's assiduity entitles him to a prompt and brief answer; he has gone through too much already to be subjected to an inflated apology.

In the first place, I considered this field interesting because it was, as far as I knew, unexplored. Nearly everyone takes it for granted that love-poetry consists entirely of pledges of affection, with perhaps a half-dozen scattered verses of the kind with which I have filled this book. If the foregoing study is not sufficiently voluminous to convince anyone of the error of such an opinion, a glance at the appendix will perhaps suffice, for the complete lists there include again as many examples as I have quoted in the course of the book.

As for the literary value of the work that I have treated, I have no delusions of grandeur. I have made no attempt to serve as press agent for the writers represented here, but I have attempted to draw attention to that in them which is interesting or amusing, even though the amusement is to be derived only from the badness of the work. Bad literature has its charms, as a recent anthology called *The Stuffed Owl* demonstrates conclusively. And then, the

rebellious lover, whatever his shortcomings, is a phenomenon that cannot be wiped out of our literary history; he deserves at least a hearing.

It should be quite plain by this time, however, that, as I said in the beginning, I am not working for the conversion of additional rebels. In fact, if I thought that this volume would have any appreciable circulation, I should look for an immediate decline in the number of new recruits, because it would be seen how relatively unoriginal the theme is.

Finally, the fact that I have survived the large amount of drudgery inevitably connected with a work of this kind, without losing my interest in the subject, makes me hope that the hypothetical reader will find at least a modicum of enjoyment in it.

Appendix

IN the following pages I have listed alphabetically, under headings corresponding to those of the preceding chapters, all of the examples of rebellious-lover poetry that I have found. Naturally, the list can make no pretensions to completeness, but it represents a careful gleaning of the material available to me. It includes all of the examples quoted in the course of this study, and perhaps as many more again.

As for the arrangement, I have adopted that which seemed to me to offer the greatest convenience to the reader, even though it requires considerable space. To assist the reader, also, I have included the dates of authors and of anonymous books wherever possible. I may say that in the case of *Wit and Mirth; or Pills to Purge Melancholy,* most of the songs in which are unsigned, I have arbitrarily called them all anonymous unless the author's name was specifically stated. A large proportion of them were probably written by Tom Durfey, but perhaps an equally large number of them are of doubtful origin.

In the bibliographical references, I have used the following shortenings for collections of which I have made very frequent use:

Chalmers = *Works of the English Poets,* ed. A. Chalmers, London, 1810.

Elizabethan Lyrics = *Elizabethan Lyrics,* ed. N. Ault, London, 1925.

Elizabethan Sonnets = *Elizabethan Sonnets*, ed. S. Lee, Westminster, 1904.

Fellowes = *English Madrigal Verse*, ed. E. H. Fellowes, Oxford, 1920.

Pepys Ballads = *The Pepys Ballads*, ed. H. E. Rollins, Cambridge, Mass., 1929.

Roxburghe Ballads = *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. J. W. Ebsworth, for the Ballad Society, 1889.

Saintsbury = *Caroline Poets*, ed. G. Saintsbury, Oxford, 1905.

Shirburn Ballads = *The Shirburn Ballads 1585–1616*, ed. A. Clark, Oxford, 1907.

Universal Songster = *The Universal Songster; or, Museum of Mirth*, London, n.d.

Vocal Magazine = *The Vocal Magazine*, London, 1781.

Wit and Mirth = *Wit and Mirth; or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, London, 1719.

XVIIth Century Lyrics = *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*, ed. N. Ault, London, 1928.

AKENSIDE, MARK (1721–70): "Love, an Elegy," *Works*, New Brunswick, N. J., 1808, II, 115. "Ode XIV, The Complaint," *Ibid.*, II, 101.

ALEXANDER, WILLIAM, EARL OF STIRLING (1580?–1640): *Aurora* CVI; Chalmers, V, 317.

ANONYMOUS:

"A Farewell to Fancy," *A Floorish upon Fancie* (1582), ed. T. P., London, 1815, p. 72.

"A Good Wife, or None," *Roxburghe Ballads*, I, 418.

"A Proper New Ditty," *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584), ed. H. E. Rollins, Cambridge, Mass., 1924, p. 55.

"A Song in Praise of a Single Life," *The Garland of Good-Will* (c. 1586), ed. J. H. Dixon, London, 1851, p. 46.

"Against Women either Good or Bad," *Tottel's Miscellanie* (1557), ed. Rollins, I, 201.

"Ah! Phillis, Why Are You Less Tender?" *Wit and Mirth*, I, 279.

"Alas, Where Is My Love?" T. Bateson's *First Set of English Madrigals* (1604); Fellowes, p. 14.

"Bacchus Triumphant," *Vocal Magazine*, p. 226.

"Be gone, Fond Love," *Poems by Several Hands*, ed. Nahum Tate, 1685, p. 246.

"Come, Fill Me a Bumper," *Vocal Magazine*, p. 64.

"Come, Shepherds, Sing with Me," T. Tomkins' *Songs* (1622); Fellowes, p. 194.

"Cupid Drown'd," *Vocal Magazine*, p. 186.

"False Love! Now Shoot and Spare Not," N. Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* (1588); *Some Shorter Elizabethan Poems*, ed. A. H. Bullen, Westminster, 1903, p. 64.

"Farewell All the Arts of Love," *Vinculum Societatis*, (1687), p. 13.

"Farewell, Disdainful," T. Morley's *Canzonets* (1593); Fellowes, p. 122.

"Farewell, False Love, for So I Find," M. East's *Second Set of Madrigals* (1606); Fellowes, p. 79.

"Farewell, False Love, the Oracle of Lies," W. Byrd's *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs* (1588); Fellowes, p. 43.

"Farewell, Farewell, Fond Love," Playford's *Select Musical Airs* (1653); *Lyrics from the Old Song-Books,* ed. E. Duncan, N. Y., 1927, p. 231.

"Forc'd by a Cruel Lawless Fate," *Wit and Mirth,* II, 173.

"I Ne Wot Quat Is Loue," in *A Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse,* by Carleton Brown, Part II (Oxford, 1920), p. 126.

"If Floods of Tears Could Cleanse My Follies Past," *Sundry Other Rare Sonnets, etc.,* appended to *Astrophel and Stella* (1591); *Elizabethan Sonnets,* I, 108.

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